

Florian Marion

The ἐξαίφνης in the Platonic Tradition: from Kinematics to Dynamics

(Draft)

Studies on Platonic ‘Theoria motus abstracti’ are often focused on dynamics rather than kinematics, in particular on psychic self-motion. This state of affairs is, of course, far from being a bland academic accident: according to Plato, dynamics is the higher science while kinematics is lower on the ‘scientific’ spectrum¹. Furthermore, when scholars investigate Platonic *abstract* kinematics, in front of them there is a very limited set of texts². Among them, one of the most interesting undoubtedly remains a passage of *Parmenides* in which Plato challenges the puzzle of the ‘instant of change’, namely the famous text about the ‘sudden’ (τὸ ἐξαίφνης).

Plato’s ἐξαίφνης actually is a *terminus technicus* and a *terminus mysticus* at once³, in such a way that from Antiquity until today this Platonic concept has been interpreted in very different fashions, either in a physical fashion or in a mystical one. Nevertheless, it has not been analysed how those two directions have been already followed by the Platonic Tradition. So, the aim of this paper is to provide some acquaintance with the exegetical history of ἐξαίφνης inside the Platonic Tradition, from Plato to Marsilio Ficino, by way of Middle Platonism and Greek Neoplatonism.

After exposing Plato’s argument of *Parm.* 156c-157b and its various interpretations (1), I shall investigate the ways by which Middle Platonists (especially Taurus) and Early Neoplatonists as Plotinus and Iamblichus have understood Plato’s use of ἐξαίφνης (2), and finally how this notion had been transferred from kinematics to dynamics in Later Neoplatonism (3).

1. PLATO’S *PARM.* 156C-157B: THE PUZZLE OF THE ‘INSTANT OF CHANGE’1.1. *The Text: Parmenides, 156c1-157b5*

Plato’s treatment of the ἐξαίφνης appears at the end of the Second Hypothesis of *Parmenides*, in a passage which is interpreted by some Platonists to be a genuine Hypothesis (so, the Third) but which likely is a kind of corollary or an appendix, linked to the Second Hypothesis⁴. Of course, other texts can be found in which Plato uses the word ἐξαίφνης, but that is in *Parmenides* wherein it seems to have a very technical meaning⁵ (notably because that is the only text in which ἐξαίφνης is used as a substantive and not as an adverb). It is why I am firstly focusing on this passage.

¹ J. VUILLEMIN, “The Systems of Plato and Aristotle Compared as to their Contribution to Physics”, in W. SPOHN, B. C. VAN FRAASSEN, B. SKYRMS (eds.), *Existence and Explanation. Essays presented in Honor of Karel Lambert*, Springer, 1991, p. 197-201

² PLATO, *Laws*, X 893b-898c

³ N. STROBACH, *The Moment of Change. A Systematic History in the Philosophy of Space and Time*, Springer, 1998, p. 20

⁴ F. M. CORNFORD, *Plato and Parmenides*, Kegan Paul, 1939, p. 194, p. 202; F. NIEWOEHNER, *Dialog und Dialektik in Platons ‘Parmenides’*, Meisenheim, 1971, p. 280; S. SCOLNICOV (ed.), *Plato’s Parmenides*, University of California Press, 2003, p. 134 and M. DIXSAUT, “Le temps qui s’avance et l’instant du changement (*Timée*, 37c-39e, *Parménide*, 140e-141e, 151e-155E)”, in *Revue Philosophique de Louvain*, 101, 2003-2, p. 260

⁵ All Plato’s and Plotinus’ uses of ἐξαίφνης are so-called ‘analysed’ in a recent monography which can only be credited to have enumerated these texts: J. CIMAKASKY, *The Role of*

Ὅταν δὲ κινούμενον τε ἴσθηται καὶ ὅταν ἐστὸς ἐπὶ τὸ κινεῖσθαι μεταβάλλῃ, δεῖ δήπου αὐτό γε μὴδ' ἐν ἐνὶ χρόνῳ εἶναι. – Πῶς δὴ; – Ἐστὸς τε πρότερον ὕστερον κινεῖσθαι καὶ πρότερον κινούμενον ὕστερον ἐστάναι, ἄνευ μὲν τοῦ μεταβάλλειν οὐχ οἶόν τε ἔσται ταῦτα πάσχειν. – Πῶς γάρ; – Χρόνος δέ γε οὐδεὶς ἔστιν, ἐν ᾧ τι οἶόν τε ἅμα μὴτε κινεῖσθαι μὴτε ἐστάναι. – Οὐ γάρ οὖν. – Ἀλλ' οὐδὲ μὴν μεταβάλλει ἄνευ τοῦ μεταβάλλειν. – Οὐκ εἰκός. – Πότ' οὖν μεταβάλλει; οὔτε γὰρ ἐστὸς ὄν οὔτε κινούμενον μεταβάλλει, οὔτε ἐν χρόνῳ ὄν. – Οὐ γάρ οὖν. – Ἄρ' οὖν ἔστι τὸ ἀτοπον τοῦτο, ἐν ᾧ τότε ἂν εἴη, ὅτε μεταβάλλει; – Τὸ ποῖον δὴ; – Τὸ εξαίφνης. τὸ γὰρ εξαίφνης τοιόνδε τι εἰκοι σημαίνειν, ὥς ἐξ ἐκείνου μεταβάλλον εἰς ἐκάτερον. οὐ γὰρ ἐκ γε τοῦ ἐστάναι ἐστῶτος ἔτι μεταβάλλει, οὐδ' ἐκ τῆς κινήσεως κινουμένης ἔτι μεταβάλλει· ἀλλὰ ἡ εξαίφνης αὕτη φύσις ἀτοπὸς τις ἐγκάθηται μεταξὺ τῆς κινήσεως τε καὶ στάσεως, ἐν χρόνῳ οὐδενὶ οὐσα, καὶ εἰς ταύτην δὴ καὶ ἐκ ταύτης τό τε κινούμενον μεταβάλλει ἐπὶ τὸ ἐστάναι καὶ τὸ ἐστὸς ἐπὶ τὸ κινεῖσθαι. – Κινδυνεύει. – Καὶ τὸ ἐν δὴ, εἴπερ ἔστηκε τε καὶ κινεῖται, μεταβάλλοι ἂν ἐφ' ἐκάτερα – μόνως γὰρ ἂν οὕτως ἀμφοτέρω ποιῶι – μεταβάλλον δ' εξαίφνης μεταβάλλει, καὶ ὅτε μεταβάλλει, ἐν οὐδενὶ χρόνῳ ἂν εἴη, οὐδὲ κινεῖται ἂν τότε, οὐδ' ἂν σταίῃ. – Οὐ γάρ. – Ἄρ' οὖν οὕτω καὶ πρὸς τὰς ἄλλας μεταβολὰς ἔχει, ὅταν ἐκ τοῦ εἶναι εἰς τὸ ἀπόλυσθαι μεταβάλλῃ ἢ ἐκ τοῦ μὴ εἶναι εἰς τὸ γίνεσθαι, μεταξὺ τινων τότε γίγνεται κινήσεων τε καὶ στάσεων, καὶ οὔτε ἔστι τότε οὔτε οὐκ ἔστι, οὔτε γίγνεται οὔτε ἀπόλυσται; – Ἔοικε γοῦν. – Κατὰ δὴ τὸν αὐτὸν λόγον καὶ ἐξ ἐνὸς ἐπὶ πολλὰ ἰὸν καὶ ἐκ πολλῶν ἐφ' ἐν οὔτε ἐν ἔστιν οὔτε πολλὰ, οὔτε διακρίνεται οὔτε συγκρίνεται. καὶ ἐξ ὁμοίου ἐπὶ ἀνόμοιον καὶ ἐξ ἀνόμοιου ἐπὶ ὁμοιον ἰὸν οὔτε ὁμοιον οὔτε ἀνόμοιον, οὔτε ὁμοιούμενον οὔτε ἀνομοιούμενον· καὶ ἐκ σμικροῦ ἐπὶ μέγα καὶ ἐπὶ ἴσον καὶ εἰς τὰ ἐναντία ἰὸν οὔτε σμικρὸν οὔτε μέγα οὔτε ἴσον, οὔτε αὐξανόμενον οὔτε φθίνον οὔτε ἰσοῦμενον εἴη ἂν. – Οὐκ ἔοικε. – Ταῦτα δὴ τὰ παθήματα πάντ' ἂν πάσχοι τὸ ἐν, εἰ ἔστιν. – Πῶς δ' οὐ;

“And when being in motion it comes to rest, and when being at rest it changes to motion, it must itself be in no time at all.” “How is that?” “It is impossible for it to be previously at rest and afterwards in motion, or previously in motion and afterwards at rest, without changing.” “Of course.” “And there is no time in which anything can be at once neither in motion nor at rest.” “No, there is none.” “And certainly it cannot change without changing.” “I should say not.” “Then when does it change? For it does not change when it is at rest or when it is in motion or when it is in time.” “No, it does not.” “Does this strange thing, then, exist, in which it would be at the moment when it changes?” “What sort of thing is that?” “The sudden. For the sudden seems to indicate a something from which there is a change in one direction or the other. For it does not change from rest while it is still at rest, nor from motion while it is still moving; but there is this strange instantaneous nature, something interposed between motion and rest, not existing at any time, and into this and out from this that which is in motion changes into rest and that which is at rest changes into motion.” “Yes, that must be so.” “Then the one, if it is at rest and in motion, must change in each direction; for that is the only way in which it can do both. But in changing, it changes instantaneously, and when it changes it can be in no time, and at that sudden it will be neither in motion nor at rest.” “No.” “And will the case not be the same in relation to other changes?” “When it changes from being to destruction or from not being to becoming, does it not pass into an intermediate stage between certain forms of motion and rest, so that it neither is nor is not, neither comes into being nor is destroyed?” “Yes, so it appears.” “And on the same principle, when it passes from one to many or from many to one, it is neither one nor many, is neither in a process of separation nor in one of combination. And in passing from like to unlike or from unlike to like, it is neither like nor unlike, neither in a process of assimilation nor in one of dissimilation; and in passing from small to great and to equal and vice versa, it is neither small nor great nor equal, neither in a process of increase, nor of diminution, nor of equality.” “Apparently not.”

“All this, then, would happen to the one, if the one exists.” “Yes, certainly.”⁶

1.2. The Puzzle of the ‘Instant of Change’: A Very Brief Summary

Plato is usually credited to be the first to have challenged the Puzzle of the ‘Instant of Change’. Nonetheless, as Strobach has recently suggested, a passage of Aristophanes’ Comedy *The Clouds* may be the first occurrence of the problem⁷. Anyway, the point remains that the puzzle has a long history, from Antiquity to today, by way of medieval instances and Leibniz’ reflections.

The puzzle can be shortly summarized as follows: let a *continuous* change between two states, which state obtains at the temporal limit between the old state and the new? In fact, this puzzle accurately is the temporal equivalent of the topological ‘Diodorean-test’⁸: the first asks ‘when?’ change is occurring, the second ‘where?’.

Philosophical Tradition offers us several illustrations to this, haphazardly: the passage between the old and the new day⁹, the death of Socrates or Dion, the whiteness of Socrates, etc. In Antiquity, the most famous incontestably was the instant of death¹⁰ either of Socrates¹¹, or, in a more Stoic way, of Dion¹² (‘when Socrates is dying? Is it when he is still alive or when he is already dead?’), while, in Middle-Age scholarship, the whiteness of Socrates (inspired by *Phys*, 8.8) became fashionable, notably at Merton College¹³. Yet, more often, these examples are understood as solely seemingly different, namely as referring to a same and more general puzzle. For instance, when Simplicius gives a commentary on a passage of the *Physics* in which Aristotle discusses the last instant of change¹⁴, he immediately draws a parallel with Plato’s ἐξαίφνης and the Hellenistic enigma of the death of Dion, notably by exposing Alexander’s solution¹⁵. However, as

⁶ English translation (modified): H. N. FOWLER (ed.), *Plato. Cratylus. Parmenides. Greater Hippias. Lesser Hippias*, Harvard University Press, 1926, p. 299-301

⁷ N. STROBACH, “Indivisible Temporal Boundaries from Aristophanes until Today”, in *Vivarium*, 55, 2017, p. 9-21

⁸ “Diodorus Kronus on Motion against Aristotle’s Kinematics: a crypto-defence of Plato’s Dynamics?”, 2017. This paper has been partially presented in Dublin: “Diodorus Kronus on Motion against Aristotle’s Kinematics”, First Dublin Graduate Conference in Ancient Philosophy. *Physis and Psychê in Ancient Philosophy: Causes, Generation, and Change*, University College Dublin/Trinity College Dublin, 31st March 2017. On the ‘Diodorean-test’, see: SEXTUS EMPIRICUS, *PH*, II, 242-243, 245, III, 71-76, *AM*, I, 309-312, X, 85-120, 142-143, 344-347. On this argument, see: R. J. HANKINSON, “Motion: *M* 10.37-168”, in K. ALGRA, K. IERODIAKONOU (eds.), *Sextus Empiricus and Ancient Physics*, Cambridge University Press, 2015, p. 234-246 and M. J. WHITE, “The Spatial Arrow Paradox”, in *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, 68-1, 1987, p. 71-77

⁹ ARISTOPHANES, *The Clouds*, 1178-1201

¹⁰ Diodorus Kronus: SEXTUS EMPIRICUS, *AM*, I 309-312; Epicureanism: DIOGENES LAËRTIUS, 10.124-126, 139 and LUCRETIUS, *De rerum natura*, III 830-911; Early Christianity: AUGUSTINE, *De Civitate Dei*, 13.9-11 (see also: G. W. LEIBNIZ, *Pacidius Philalethi* (1676), in L. COUTURAT (ed.), *Opusculs et fragments inédits de Leibniz*, Olms, 1961, p. 599-600 (= Akademie Ausgabe, series 6, vol. 3, Berlin, 1980, p. 535-536) and L. WITTGENSTEIN, *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*, 6.4311)

¹¹ SEXTUS EMPIRICUS, *AM*, IX 269, 344-50, *PH* III 110-114

¹² SIMPLICIUS, *In Phys*, 982.1-984.2, 1299.36-1300.36

¹³ See: N. KRETZMANN, “Socrates is Whiter than Plato begins to be White”, in *Noûs*, 11-1, 1977, p. 3-15 and E. D. SYLLA, “The Oxford Calculators”, in N. KRETZMANN, A. KENNY, J. PINBORG, E. STUMP (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy. From the Rediscovery of Aristotle to the Disintegration of Scholasticism 1100-1600*, Cambridge University Press, 1982, p. 540-563

¹⁴ ARISTOTLE, *Phys*, 6.5 235b32-236a7

¹⁵ SIMPLICIUS, *In Phys*, 982.1-984.2

Sorabji has demonstrated¹⁶, the case of the transition between *moving* and *resting* is quite different to the precedents, in a sense more problematic because this case challenges with the ideas of changing at an instant and of instantaneous velocity. But, here, the difference can be laid aside because, unlike Aristotle¹⁷, Plato was not aware of this subtlety (the opposition between motion and rest is presented as an opposition amongst others¹⁸).

I shall explain in detail neither the deep meaning of the puzzle, nor weigh up the pros and cons of its various readings¹⁹; I shall just present in few words the possible answers.

Obviously, there are only four possibilities to conceive the description of the ‘instant of change’. Given a change between A and $\neg A$, either the instant of change $i?$ belongs to only a ‘side’ (1 and 2), or neither (3), or both (4):

... i_A ... i_A ... i_A ... i_A ... i_A ... $i?$... $i_{\neg A}$... $i_{\neg A}$... $i_{\neg A}$... $i_{\neg A}$...	
A	$\neg A$
<hr/>	
1. $i? = i_A$	3. $i? = i_{\neg A \wedge \neg A}$
2. $i? = i_{\neg A}$	4. $i? = i_{A \wedge \neg A}$

Not surprisingly, all of these four answers had been – and are again –, supported, even if 3 and 4 seems to infringe some logical laws, respectively, of Excluded Middle and of Contradiction²⁰. By virtue of this possible unfortunate consequence, the *either/or*-option (namely solutions 1 and 2) has been preferred for a long time, notably by Aristotle (solution 2) whose authority was followed by the majority of Medieval thinkers²¹, sometimes, of course, with great amendments.

More interesting, each of the four answers have been sustained in very various ways. For instance, Stoicism sustained a kind of Both-states-option by analysing tensed complex propositions which can modify their truth-value according to the circumstances (ἀξιιώματα ἀ μεταπίπτοντά τινες λέγουσιν ἀπεριγράφως)²², Medieval theologians – as Henry of Ghent²³, John Baconthorpe, Hugh of Novocastro and Landolfo Caracciolo – by having recourse to the very Scotist distinction between ‘instant (or signs) of nature’ and ‘instant

¹⁶ R. SORABJI, *Time, creation and the continuum*, Duckworth, 1983, p. 403-421

¹⁷ See: R. SORABJI, *Time, creation and the continuum*, Duckworth, 1983, p. 409-415

¹⁸ PLATO, *Parmenides*, 156a-c, 156e-157b. However, for a precision on this Platonic indifference which is in fact highly sustained by the distinction between several levels of processes, namely one for the becoming taken as a whole, and another for the motions and rests of the particular items, see the footnote 407.

¹⁹ For a detailed survey, see the excellent: N. STROBACH, *The Moment of Change. A Systematic History in the Philosophy of Space and Time*, Springer, 1998

²⁰ M. J. WHITE, “The Foundations of the Calculus and the Conceptual Analysis of Motion: The Case of the Early Leibniz (1670-1676)”, in *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, 73, 1992, p. 287

²¹ For instance: Albert the Great, William of Sherwood, Peter of Spain, Walter Burley, William of Ockham, Thomas Bradwardine, Richard Kilvington, William Heytesbury, John of Holland, and Paul of Venice, etc. For an overview of the puzzle in Medieval thought, see: N. KRETZMANN, “Incipit/Desinit”, in P. K. MACHAMER, R. G. TURNBULL (eds.), *Motion and Time, Space and Matter. Interrelations in the History of Philosophy and Science*, Ohio State University Press, 1976, p. 101-136 and N. STROBACH, *The Moment of Change. A Systematic History in the Philosophy of Space and Time*, Springer, 1998, p. 84-110

²² SIMPLICIUS, *In Phys*, 1299.36-1300.36. See: M. RASHED (ed.), *Alexandre d'Aphrodise, Commentaire perdu à la Physique d'Aristote (livres IV-VIII). Les scholies byzantines*, de Gruyter, 2011, p. 109-112, p. 610-613 and B. MATES, *Stoic Logic*, University of California Press, 1961, p. 36

²³ See: S. KNUUTTILA, “Change and Contradiction in Henry of Ghent”, in *Vivarium*, 55, 2017, p. 22-35

of time'²⁴, and modern Hegelianism as Graham Priest's dialetheism by elaborating a paraconsistent logic²⁵. It must be remarked that only the later supports the Both-states-option in its strongest fashion according to which motion involves the rejection of the logical law of Contradiction, so that this principle is sometimes, in very circumscribed cases, irrelevant (of course, dialetheism does not imply the *ex falso quodlibet*).

It was happened that these answers had been simultaneously supported by rival schools, notably in Hellenistic period in which the Both-states-option was espoused by Stoicism, a kind of *either/or*-option by Aristotelianism, and, as I shall argue, a *neither/nor*-option by Platonism. There is, of course, a great absent in this Hellenistic overview. Indeed, Epicureanism, by denying one premiss of the puzzle, must not select an answer or another: given that its atomism involves the rejection of the continuum, so of the continuity of motion, then there is simply not a weird stuff like an 'instant of change', in such a way that a moving item actually progress by discontinuous leaps²⁶, as the pictures inside a cinematograph. Leibniz' solution is very similar: during the four seasons of 1676, he swops his old *conatus*-continuism in favour of contiguity, avoiding the puzzle of the 'instant of change'²⁷.

1.3. Plato's Solution and Its Various Interpretations

Parm, 156c-157b has been interpreted by modern scholars in various ways. Notably, it had been manipulated by them in their debates about a so-called time-atomism in Plato's thought²⁸, or for sustaining their own views on the philosophical tradition to which Plato belongs²⁹.

Even if Plato would have admitted a kind of time-atoms (as Strang, Iamblichus and Damascius have argued in their commentaries), the discussion on the 'instant of change' shows enough that he would consider that those time-atoms must come one after one by a continuous chain and surely not by a contiguous one: insofar as the transition from motion

²⁴ See: S. KNUUTTILA, A. I. LEHTINEN, "Change and Contradiction: A Fourteenth-Century Controversy", in *Synthese*, 40, 1979, p. 189-207; N. KRETZMANN, "Continuity, Contrariety, Contradiction, and Change", in N. KRETZMANN (ed.), *Infinity and Continuity in Ancient and Medieval Thought*, Cornell University Press, 1982, p. 270-296; P. V. SPADE, "Quasi-Aristotelianism", in N. KRETZMANN (ed.), *Infinity and Continuity in Ancient and Medieval Thought*, Cornell University Press, 1982, p. 297-307 and W. O. DUBA, "Quasi-Aristotelians and Proto-Scotists", in *Vivarium*, 55, 2017, p. 60-84

²⁵ G. PRIEST, *In Contradiction. A Study of the Transconsistent*, Oxford Clarendon Press, 2006, p. 159-181, "Inconsistencies in Motion", in *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 22-4, 1985, p. 339-346, "Contradiction and the Instant of Change Revisited", in *Vivarium*, 55, 2017, p. 217-226. Priest comments on 156c-157b from a dialetheist point of view in: G. PRIEST, *One. Being an Investigation into the Unity of Reality and of its Parts, including the Singular Object which is Nothingless*, Oxford University Press, 2014, p. 134-137

²⁶ See: M. RASHED (ed.), *Alexandre d'Aphrodise, Commentaire perdu à la Physique d'Aristote (livres IV-VIII). Les scholies byzantines*, de Gruyter, 2011, p. 109-112

²⁷ The history of this Leibnizian evolution from *Hypothesis Physica Nova* (1671) to *Pacidius Philalethi* (1676) and beyond is admirably traced with the texts available in: R. T. W. ARTHUR (ed.), *The Labyrinth of the Continuum. G. W. Leibniz, Writings on the Continuum Problem 1672-1686*, Yale University Press, 2001 (see also: Ph. BEELEY, *Kontinuität und Mechanismus. Zur Philosophie des Jungen Leibniz in ihrem Ideengeschichtlichen Kontext*, Studia Leibnitiana Suppl. 30, Stuttgart, 1996)

²⁸ The Strang-Mills Debate: C. STRANG, K. W. MILLS, "Plato and the Instant", in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volumes*, 48, 1974, p. 63-96. Briefly summarized in: R. SORABJI, *Time, creation and the continuum*, Duckworth, 1983, p. 359-361. Strang argues that Plato had embraced the idea of time-atoms by analysing *Parm*, 152b-d. So, in fact, Strang just follows Damascius' interpretation of this passage (the 'now' understood as a 'indivisible-and-divisible leap').

²⁹ See: F. M. CORNFORD, *Plato and Parmenides*, Kegan Paul, 1939, p. 202-203

to rest does not occur at any time-atom, but at a durationless ‘sudden’, time-atoms must constitute together a continuum³⁰. At any rate, since the puzzle of the ‘instant of change’ mainly is a continuum-problem³¹, Plato’s ἐξαίφνης should be described according to one of the four possibilities introduced above.

Unfortunately, Plato’s text is maybe not very clear-cut, notably on the ontological and logical status of the ἐξαίφνης. By virtue of this relative obscurity, scholars have more or less explicitly provided no fewer than three kinds of solutions.

1. The ἐξαίφνης is a kind of proto-Hegelian *Aufhebung*-item, namely the ‘sudden’ is beyond the time and ‘puts aside/away’³² (namely ‘destroyed-and-preserved’) both the earlier and later states³³. This solution entails a rejection of the logical laws of Contradiction and Excluded Middle at once.

2. The ἐξαίφνης is outside of time, and is neither in the earlier state, nor in the later³⁴.

3. The ἐξαίφνης is apart from time, because, strictly speaking, time is not composed out of durationless instants, and is neither in the earlier state, nor in the later, in such a way that Plato would have supported a variant of the Neutral-Instant Analysis³⁵. This interpretation seems to involve a *local* rejection of the law of Excluded Middle, since it is false that at any instant an item must be either in A or in $\neg A$ ³⁶.

Deciding between these interpretations requires to come back to *Parm*, 156c-157b. It is astonishingly not very difficult to find a lot of textual evidences sustaining the view according to which the ‘sudden’ firstly is apart from time, and secondly is neither in A-state nor in $\neg A$ -state.

The ‘sudden’ is apart from time	The ‘sudden’ is neither in A nor in $\neg A$
156c1-3: Ὅταν δὲ κινούμενον τε ἴσθαι καὶ ὅταν ἐστὸς ἐπὶ τὸ κινεῖσθαι μεταβάλλῃ, δεῖ δήπου αὐτὸ γὰρ μὴδ’ ἐν ἐνὶ χρόνῳ εἶναι.	156c6-7: Χρόνος δὲ γὰρ οὐδεὶς ἔστιν, ἐν ᾧ τὶ οἷόν τε ἅμα μῆτε κινεῖσθαι μῆτε ἐστάναι.

³⁰ R. SORABJI, *Time, creation and the continuum*, Duckworth, 1983, p. 361

³¹ As Natorp has perfectly noted: P. NATORP, *Platos Ideelehre. Eine Einführung in den Idealismus*, Leipzig, 1921, p. 261-263. Following some suggestions of Natorp, Cherniss interprets the ἐξαίφνης in a very simulating mathematical way, namely as a kind of infinitesimal: H. F. CHERNISS, “Parmenides and the Parmenides of Plato”, in *The American Journal of Philology*, 53-2, 1932, p. 132 n. 25

³² To use the English translation of *Aufheben* employed by British idealism. ‘put aside’ in W. T. STACE, *The Philosophy of Hegel*, Oxford Clarendon Press, 1924, p. 106 and ‘put away’ in B. BOSANQUET, “The Aesthetic Theory of Ugliness”, in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 1-3, 1889/1900, p. 39

³³ J. WAHL, *Etude sur le Parménide de Platon*, F. Rieder, 1926, p. 167-172; W. BEIERWALTES, “Exaiphnês oder: die Paradoxie des Augenblicks”, *Philosophisches Jahrbuch*, 74, 1966/1967, p. 271-283 and L. BRISSON, “L’instant, le temps, et l’éternité dans le Parménide (155e-157b) de Platon”, in *Dialogue*, 9, 1970-3, p. 389-396

³⁴ D. BOSTOCK, “Plato on Change and Time in the ‘Parmenides’”, in *Phronesis*, 23-3, 1978, p. 229-242

³⁵ P. NATORP, *Platos Ideelehre. Eine Einführung in den Idealismus*, Leipzig, 1921, p. 261-263; S. KNUUTTILA, “Remarks on the Background of the Fourteenth-Century Limit Decision Controversies”, in M. ASZTALOS (ed.), *The Editing of Theological and Philosophical Texts from the Middle Ages*, Almqvist & Wiksell, 1986, p. 247 and R. SORABJI, *Time, creation and the continuum*, Duckworth, 1983, p. 408. On the Neutral-Instant Analysis, see: N. KRETZMANN, “Incipit/Desinit”, in P. K. MACHAMER, R. G. TURNBULL (eds.), *Motion and Time, Space and Matter. Interrelations in the History of Philosophy and Science*, Ohio State University Press, 1976, p. 101-136

³⁶ This local rejection seems to be accepted by Owen: G. E. L. OWEN, “Notes on Ryle’s Plato”, in O. P. WOOD, G. PITCHER (eds.), *Ryle*, MacMillan, 1970, p. 358-359

156c6-7: Χρόνος δέ γε οὐδεὶς ἔστιν, ἐν ᾧ τι οἷόν τε ἅμα μῆτε κινεῖσθαι μῆτε ἐστάναι.	156c8-d1: Πότ' οὖν μεταβάλλει; οὔτε γὰρ ἐστὸς ὄν οὔτε κινούμενον μεταβάλλει, οὔτε ἐν χρόνῳ ὄν.
156c8-d1: Πότ' οὖν μεταβάλλει; οὔτε γὰρ ἐστὸς ὄν οὔτε κινούμενον μεταβάλλει, οὔτε ἐν χρόνῳ ὄν.	156d4-5: οὐ γὰρ ἕκ γε τοῦ ἐστάναι ἐστώτος ἔτι μεταβάλλει, οὐδ' ἐκ τῆς κινήσεως κινουμένης ἔτι μεταβάλλει
156d6-e1: ἀλλὰ ἡ ἐξαίφνης αὕτη φύσις ἄτοπός τις ἐγκάθηται μεταξύ τῆς κινήσεώς τε καὶ στάσεως, ἐν χρόνῳ οὐδενὶ οὔσα	156e5-7: καὶ ὅτε μεταβάλλει, ἐν οὐδενὶ χρόνῳ ἂν εἴη, οὐδὲ κινεῖτ' ἂν τότε, οὐδ' ἂν σταίη
156e5-6: μεταβάλλον δ' ἐξαίφνης μεταβάλλει, καὶ ὅτε μεταβάλλει, ἐν οὐδενὶ χρόνῳ ἂν εἴη	157a2-3: καὶ οὔτε ἔστι τότε οὔτε οὐκ ἔστι, οὔτε γίγνεται οὔτε ἀπόλλυται;
	157a4-b2: κατὰ δὴ τὸν αὐτὸν λόγον καὶ ἐξ ἑνὸς ἐπὶ πολλὰ ἰὸν καὶ ἐκ πολλῶν ἐφ' ἐν οὔτε ἐν ἔστιν οὔτε πολλά, οὔτε διακρίνεται οὔτε συγκρίνεται. καὶ ἐξ ὁμοίου ἐπὶ ἀνόμοιον καὶ ἐξ ἀνόμοιου ἐπὶ ὁμοιον ἰὸν οὔτε ὁμοιον οὔτε ἀνόμοιον, οὔτε ὁμοιούμενον οὔτε ἀνομοιούμενον· καὶ ἐκ μικροῦ ἐπὶ μέγα καὶ ἐπὶ ἴσον καὶ εἰς τὰ ἐναντία ἰὸν οὔτε μικρὸν οὔτε μέγα οὔτε ἴσον, οὔτε ἀξάνόμενον οὔτε φθίνον οὔτε ἰσούμενον εἴη ἂν

Yet, the question is: what is the meaning of the two theses? Indeed, claiming that the ‘sudden’ is apart from time is very underdetermined. Albeit the text explicitly draws a clear opposition between χρόνος and ἐξαίφνης, Plato makes such a distinction without explaining this in detail. Likewise, asserting that the ‘sudden’ is neither in A-state nor in —A-state which can involve different logical status for the ‘sudden’.

Now, I shall follow the great lines of Strobach’s analysis of the passage³⁷, in my view Strobach had wonderfully and completely summarized and challenged all the logical twists and turns of Plato’s text.

The difference between χρόνος and ἐξαίφνης, and the thesis according to which the ‘sudden’ is apart from time can be understood as the ‘sudden’ is not an entity belonging to the set of χρόνοι but remains a kind of temporal-entity, since saying ‘a thing is changing suddenly’ apparently constitutes a relevant answer to the question ‘when a thing is moving?’, in such a way that χρόνοι and ἐξαίφνης are two mutually exclusive subsets of the higher set of temporal-entities. Thus, a χρόνος could be conceived as a *period* or as a *phase*, namely a *temporal stretch* with *duration*, whereas an ἐξαίφνης could be a *durationless* item like an *instant* or *moment* which would be a kind of *limit* between two χρόνοι³⁸. Such a very common interpretation, which entailing that Plato’s ἐξαίφνης is very

³⁷ N. STROBACH, *The Moment of Change. A Systematic History in the Philosophy of Space and Time*, Springer, 1998, p. 7-8, p. 20-46 (with fewer amendments)

³⁸ P. NATORP, *Platos Ideelehre. Eine Einführung in den Idealismus*, Leipzig, 1921, p. 261-263; C. STRANG, “Plato and the Instant”, in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volumes*, 48, 1974, p. 68, p. 71-73; K. W. MILLS, “Plato and the Instant”, in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volumes*, 48, 1974, p. 88 and N. STROBACH, *The Moment of Change. A Systematic History in the Philosophy of Space and Time*, Springer, 1998, p. 35-41

harmonized with Aristotle's νῦν³⁹, was explicitly favoured by Simplicius when he was commenting the *Physics*⁴⁰.

Notwithstanding, 'apart from time' might also mean 'beyond the time' or 'outside of time'⁴¹, in such a way that the 'sudden' would not be a temporal-entity but something else which rather belongs to an everlasting realm⁴². According to such an interpretation, χρόνος would not be just a *period* but more generally any temporal-entity, that is to say χρόνος is equivalent of 'time' with all its various meanings. In this case, of course, how the 'sudden' can remain a relevant answer to the question *when* (πότε) an object is changing? Well, Plato has precisely introduced the 'sudden' to answer this issue:

156c8-d1: Πότε' οὖν μεταβάλλει; οὔτε γὰρ ἐστὸς ὄν οὔτε κινούμενον μεταβάλλει, οὔτε ἐν χρόνῳ ὄν.

Furthermore, what is the meaning of an *eternal switch* occurring beyond time? What is an *extratemporal event*? Unless arguing that Plato was a pioneer for Loop Gravity Theory⁴³, that makes utterly no sense. Those who support this view seem in fact either banishing the idea of switching from ἐξαίφνης, in such a way that the 'sudden' becomes merely a changeless entity, or sustaining that the 'sudden' is both a stuff in which a change is occurring and in which it does not occur on the one hand, and a stuff in which a change neither occurs nor does not occur on the other, because the 'sudden' 'puts away' motion and rest, eternity and time. But scholars⁴⁴ who claiming such a proto-Hegelian interpretation were doing bad poetry⁴⁵ rather than challenging seriously Plato's argument. Contrary to them, as we will see, Damascius had rigorously elaborated this kind of interpretation in his commentary on *Parmenides*. Indeed, he did it in a very specific and, above all, *Platonistic* framework, sustaining his very original view notably by taking account of the intermediary and very uncatchable nature of soul⁴⁶.

³⁹ ARISTOTLE, *Phys*, 4.11, 13

⁴⁰ SIMPLICIUS, *In Phys*, 982.6 (see also, for an opposition between durationless change (whose Simplicius says it happens ἐξαίφνης) and change with duration: *In De Caelo*, 119.28-121.4)

⁴¹ D. BOSTOCK, "Plato on Change and Time in the 'Parmenides'", in *Phronesis*, 23-3, 1978, p. 236-238 and N. STROBACH, *The Moment of Change. A Systematic History in the Philosophy of Space and Time*, Springer, 1998, p. 33-35

⁴² So, the 'sudden' may be understood as a gate through which the ideas or forms could somehow penetrate the sensible realm: W. BEIERWALTES, "Exaiphnês oder: die Paradoxie des Augenblicks", *Philosophisches Jahrbuch*, 74, 1966/1967, p. 271-283 and L. BRISSON, "L'instant, le temps, et l'éternité dans le *Parménide* (155e-157b) de Platon", in *Dialogue*, 9, 1970-3, p. 389-396 (such a reading obviously interprets *Parm*, 156c-e in the light of *Symposium* and *Seventh Letter*). See also: H. HÖFFDING, *Bemerkungen über den Platonischen Dialog Parmenides*, Simion, 1921, p. 34-35

⁴³ C. ROVELLI, F. VIDOTTO, *Covariant Loop Quantum Gravity. An Elementary Introduction to Quantum Gravity and Spinfoam Theory*, Cambridge University Press, 2015, p. 30-57

⁴⁴ The most recent is: J. CIMAKEY, *The Role of Exaiphnês in Early Greek Literature. Philosophical Transformation in Plato's Dialogues and Beyond*, Lexington Books, 2017, p. 56 n. 10 based on K. M. SAYRE, *Parmenides' Lesson. Translation and Explication of Plato's Parmenides*, University of Notre Dame Press, 1996, p. 248

⁴⁵ For instance, Brisson writes: "L'instant est la fissure par laquelle l'éternité permet le déploiement du temps. C'est la chaîne d'or qui rattache le temps à ce point immuable qu'est l'éternité. Bref, cette explosion figée et continue qu'est l'éternité n'apparaît dans le temps que comme un crépitement incessant d'instant discrets. L'éternité est l'instant absolu ; le temps, l'instant toujours remis en cause" (p. 394). I have a preference for Novalis.

⁴⁶ C. STEEL, *The Changing Self. A Study on the Soul in Later Neoplatonism: Iamblichus, Damascius and Priscianus*, Brussel, 1978, p. 89-92

Nonetheless, the first interpretation should not be favoured only for its conceptual consistency, since there are other Platonic texts in which χρόνος and ἐξαίφνης play the same role of mutual exclusive subsets of temporal-entities. Remarkably those texts are all present in the last Plato's dialogue, namely the *Laws*. For instance, when Plato was discussing the moral condition of men during the Great Period of Disasters⁴⁷, he has consciously built an opposition between a moral evolution without any duration and a moral evolution which requires duration, for concluding that the advancement toward the moral condition typical of 4th-Century BC must have been being progressive and step by step⁴⁸:

ΑΘ. Οὐκοῦν προϊόντος μὲν τοῦ χρόνου, πληθύνοντος δ' ἡμῶν τοῦ γένους, εἰς πάντα τὰ νῦν καθεστηκότα προελήλυθεν πάντα; ΚΛ. Ὅρθότατα.
ΑΘ. Οὐκ ἐξαίφνης γε, ὡς εἰκός, κατὰ σμικρὸν δὲ ἐν παμπόλλῳ τινὶ χρόνῳ.
ΚΛ. Καὶ μάλα πρέπει τοῦθ' οὕτως.

ATH. As **time** went on and our race multiplied, all things advanced – did they not? – to the condition which now exists.
CLIN. Exactly.
ATH. But, in all probability, they advanced, not **suddenly** <all at once>, but by small degrees, in the course of an immense **period of time**.
CLIN. Yes, that is most likely.⁴⁹

Further, even if the link with *Parmenides* is less obvious, Plato drew a distinction between two kinds of crimes of passion, one which occurs 'suddenly' without any premeditation and another which occurs with a period of premeditation⁵⁰. Thus, it appears that the *Laws* keeps a record of the *kinematic* lessons of *Parmenides*, in such a way that the last dialogue of Plato sustains the view according to which the 'sudden' is 'apart from time' inasmuch as it is a *durationless* temporal-entity and in no way a kind of everlasting entity beyond the γένεσις-realm.

I shall now follow Strobach logical analysis of the text⁵¹ to clarify the logical status of the 'sudden'. Let M_a (from μεταβάλλει) as being a statement which must be read as 'the item a is changing at...'. A_a means 'the item a is in A -state', while $\neg A_a$ means 'the item a is in $\neg A$ -state'. Π (from πότε) is the set of relevant things wherein an item can be and satisfying the question 'when?'. One subset of Π is X (from χρόνος) – namely the subset of all *temporal* items which have duration – and another is E (from ἐξαίφνης)⁵². The logical structure of *Parm*, 155e-156e may be reconstructed as follows:

155e4-9	$\neg \exists x \neg \exists y [(x \in \Pi) \wedge (y \in \Pi)] \wedge [((A_a(x) \wedge \neg A_a(y)) \vee (\neg A_a(x) \wedge A_a(y))) \wedge (x=y)]$	Law of Contradiction
155e10-11	$\forall x \forall y [(x \in X) \wedge (y \in X)] \wedge [(A_a(x) \wedge \neg A_a(y)) \Rightarrow (x \neq y)]$	Law of Contradiction for χρόνοι
	$\forall x (x \in \Pi) \wedge [M_a(x) \Rightarrow (\neg A_a(x) \wedge \neg \neg A_a(x))]$	Plato's Premiss
156c1-7	$\neg \exists x (x \in X) \wedge [(\neg A_a(x) \wedge \neg \neg A_a(x))]$	Law of Excluded Middle for χρόνοι
156c8-d1	$\neg \exists x (x \in X) \wedge M_a(x)$	Negative thesis
156d1-e3	$\forall x (x \in \Pi) \wedge [M_a(x) \Rightarrow (x \in E)]$	Positive thesis
156e3-6	$\exists x (x \in E) \wedge M_a(x)$	Existence claim for ἐξαίφνης
156e6-7	$\exists x (x \in E) \wedge [(\neg A_a(x) \wedge \neg \neg A_a(x))]$	Logical status of ἐξαίφνης

⁴⁷ PLATO, *Laws*, III 677a-681b

⁴⁸ PLATO, *Laws*, III 678b5-c1

⁴⁹ English translation (modified): R. G. BURY (ed.), *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, Harvard University Press, vol. 10, 1926, p. 171

⁵⁰ PLATO, *Laws*, IX 866d-872c (the word ἐξαίφνης appears in 866d7, 867a3 and 867b6)

⁵¹ N. STROBACH, *The Moment of Change. A Systematic History in the Philosophy of Space and Time*, Springer, 1998, p. 22-32 (with some fewer amendments)

⁵² N. STROBACH, *The Moment of Change. A Systematic History in the Philosophy of Space and Time*, Springer, 1998, p. 26-28

The logical conclusion of Plato's argument is quite questionable. Perhaps, it is possible to infer from $\neg A_a(x) \wedge \neg \neg A_a(x)$ that Plato infringes the laws of Contradiction and of Excluded Middle at once, namely that $\neg A_a(x) \wedge \neg \neg A_a(x)$ necessarily involves both $A_a(x) \wedge \neg A_a(x)$ and $\neg(A_a(x) \vee \neg A_a(x))$ ⁵³. But it is in fact more complex, because $A_a(x) \wedge \neg A_a(x)$ is produced by applying a rule of double-negation (namely: $\neg \neg A \Rightarrow A$), while $\neg(A_a(x) \vee \neg A_a(x))$ is obtained by applying one of De Morgan's Laws (namely: $\neg A \wedge \neg \neg A \Rightarrow \neg(A \vee \neg A)$). Yet, and that is the point, Intuitionism is precisely characterized by the rejection of the universality of the Law of Excluded Middle (notably in the case of infinite collections)⁵⁴ and some rules of double-negation at once, but does not deny the validity of all De Morgan's Laws⁵⁵. In fact, the most fundamental rule denied by intuitionism precisely is $\neg \neg A \Rightarrow A$, viz. the logical fact that two negations cancel each other, involving a reduction from double negation to assertion.

Intuitionistic Logic	
Valid Theorems	Non-Valid Theorems
$A \Rightarrow \neg \neg A$	$\neg \neg A \Rightarrow A$
$\neg A \wedge \neg B \Leftrightarrow \neg(A \vee B)$	
$\neg A \vee \neg B \Rightarrow \neg(A \wedge B)$	$\neg(A \wedge B) \Rightarrow \neg A \vee \neg B$

Thus, an Intuitionist, who is interpreting Plato's argument, would conclude that it involves only the rejection of the Law of Excluded Middle without denying the Law of Contradiction. He might justify his claim by distinguishing the 'empirically accessibility' of χρόνοι, namely the fact that it is possible to discriminate by experience whether or not something is the case at a χρόνος which has duration, and the 'empirically inaccessibility' of durationless ἐξαιφνης – in such a way that this 'empirically verifiability' plays the same role as the 'provability' in Intuitionistic Mathematics⁵⁶.

⁵³ N. STROBACH, *The Moment of Change. A Systematic History in the Philosophy of Space and Time*, Springer, 1998, p. 28. In his dialetheist reading of the *Parmenides*, Graham Priest sustains that the Platonic ἐξαιφνης necessarily infringes the Law of Contradiction: G. PRIEST, *One. Being an Investigation into the Unity of Reality and of its Parts, including the Singular Object which is Nothingless*, Oxford University Press, 2014, p. 134-137. But, from a logical point of view, his justification is too naive (and very partial) in comparison with the one of Strobach.

⁵⁴ A. HEYTING, *Intuitionism. An Introduction*, North-Holland Publishing Company, 1971, p. 1-2; M. DUMMETT, *Elements of Intuitionism*, Oxford Clarendon Press, 1977, p. 11-13, p. 61-62

⁵⁵ A. HEYTING, *Intuitionism. An Introduction*, North-Holland Publishing Company, 1971, p. 17-18, p. 103-105; M. DUMMETT, *Elements of Intuitionism*, Oxford Clarendon Press, 1977, p. 17-18

⁵⁶ N. STROBACH, *The Moment of Change. A Systematic History in the Philosophy of Space and Time*, Springer, 1998, p. 28-29 (Furthermore, Strobach pertinently remarks that if $\neg A_a(x)$ is substituted by $A_a(x)$, then T1 becomes $A_a(x) \wedge \neg A_a(x)$ which infringes the Law of Contradiction. In fact, strictly speaking, as $A \vee \neg A$, $\neg(A \vee \neg A)$ is not an Intuitionistic thesis, contrary to $\neg \neg(A \vee \neg A)$. But, of course $\neg \neg(A \vee \neg A)$ is intuitionistically not equivalent to $A \vee \neg A$, see: A. HEYTING, *Intuitionism. An Introduction*, North-Holland Publishing Company, 1971, p. 105 and J. FISHER, *On the Philosophy of Logic*, Thomson Wadsworth, 2008, p. 126-128. Sustaining desperately the view presented above, I may note that the distinction between *negation* – understood as a logical functor – and *rejection* – understood as a theoretical belief, so as a metalogical act – is perhaps not as well clear-cut as expected, especially in an un-formalized logical context as it is obviously the case in *Parmenides*)

Intuitionistic Logic			
Valid Inference		Non-Valid Inference	
T1. $\neg A_a(x) \wedge \neg \neg A_a(x)$	Rule: $\neg A \wedge \neg B \Leftrightarrow \neg(A \vee B)$	T1. $\neg A_a(x) \wedge \neg \neg A_a(x)$	Rule: $\neg \neg A \Rightarrow A$
T2. $\neg(A_a(x) \vee \neg A_a(x))$		T2. $A_a(x) \wedge \neg A_a(x)$	
Conclusion: Negation of the Law of Excluded Middle		Conclusion: Negation of the Law of Contradiction	

Perhaps Plato had in mind a kind of intuitionistic reasoning when he is asserting that in the ‘sudden’, an item holds neither the A-state, nor its negation, but without holding both A-state and its negation. However, Plato was probably not as well accommodating with Intuitionistic Logic as Anaxagoras⁵⁷ or Epicurus⁵⁸ who denied together the universal validity of the Excluded Middle and, at least for Epicurus, elaborated an Intuitionistic epistemology.

That is why it is surely better to take account of the following textual fact⁵⁹: Plato has only written that at a *χρόνος* any thing must be either in A-state or in $\neg A$ -state (156c1-7), in such a way that the Excluded Middle must be applied for *χρόνοι* but not necessarily for *ἐξάιφνης*, in the same way as every surface should be coloured but the lines should not. In other words, the ‘sudden’ is simply not an item for which A-state or $\neg A$ -state must necessarily be used⁶⁰. So, strictly speaking, Plato had infringed neither the Law of Contradiction nor the Law of Excluded Middle which are logical principles explicitly held by him elsewhere⁶¹. Here, however, Plato was not as well clear-sighted as Aristotle⁶². Indeed, if at each ‘sudden’, by its very nature, a thing can be either *moving* or *resting* or *neither-moving-nor-resting*, what is the meaning of *moving* at a ‘sudden’? And whether at each ‘sudden’, by its very nature, a thing cannot be either in A-state or $\neg A$ -state but can be only *neither-in A-state-nor-in $\neg A$ -state*, what is the difference between any ‘sudden’ and the ‘instant of change’?

Of course, according to this last reading, the nature of *ἐξάιφνης* is negatively exhibited by contrast with *χρόνος* rather than positively clarified in itself. So, its φύσις remains very ἄτοπον (156d6-7). Yet, Plato did not look to be burdened with such a weirdness, inasmuch as he did not return further or elsewhere on the ‘sudden’ to shedding light on its odd nature

⁵⁷ ARISTOTLE, *Met*, Γ 7, *de Interp*, 9 18b16-25. On Anaxagoras and Intuitionism, see: J. VUILLEMIN, *Necessity or Contingency. The Master Argument*, CSLI Publications, 1996, p. 140 n.11, p. 174

⁵⁸ CICERO, *De fato*, 12.28, 16.37, *Lucullus*, 30.97, *De Natura deorum*, I, 25; PLUTARCH, *De Pythiae Oraculis*, 398f-399a. See also: “Neglected Evidence for Epicurus on the Excluded Middle: The Logical Background of Seneca’s *De Tranquillitate Animi*”, 2017. On Epicurean Intuitionism, see: J. VUILLEMIN, *Necessity or Contingency. The Master Argument*, CSLI Publications, 1996, p. 169-187

⁵⁹ To be exhaustive, Strobach provides another possible logical interpretation, according to which Plato may have elaborated a kind of three-valued logic (true, false, neither-true-nor-false), but that sounds very odd. See: N. STROBACH, *The Moment of Change. A Systematic History in the Philosophy of Space and Time*, Springer, 1998, p. 29-30

⁶⁰ Here, I cease to closely follow Strobach for supporting a view more ‘Hamblinian’. See: N. STROBACH, *The Moment of Change. A Systematic History in the Philosophy of Space and Time*, Springer, 1998, p. 30-32, p. 36 (however, Strobach is aware of the likeness between Plato and Hamblin, see: p. 171-182) and Ch. L. HAMBLIN, “Instants and Intervals”, in *Studium Generale*, 24, 1971, p. 127-134

⁶¹ For instance, see: PLATO, *Republic*, IV 436b, d-e (Plato sustains his view by a spinning-top which is not simultaneously *moving* and *resting* in the same regard)

⁶² Aristotle treats the very special case of *moving/resting* at an instant in: ARISTOTLE, *Phys*, 6.3. 234a24-b9, 8 239a10-b4 (see: R. SORABJI, *Time, creation and the continuum*, Duckworth, 1983, p. 409-415)

– quite the reverse of his best pupil who shall deploy a wealth of subtleties to catch the very nature of the νῦν⁶³.

1.4. The Irreducible Weirdness of ἐξαιφνης: Platonism and Aristotelianism on the Status of Physical Sciences

Actually, such a state of affairs is far from being an accidental failure. The weirdness of ἐξαιφνης is in fact just a consequence of Plato's flimsy esteem for kinematics, by contrast with the very importance of dynamics⁶⁴. In other words, as Vuillemin had brilliantly argued⁶⁵, that is a consequence of Platonic hierarchy of physical sciences resulting from Plato's multi-layered vertical ontology.

For Platonism, sensible motion and its trajectory resort to the calculations of more or less perfect souls, in such a way that the more perfect soul is, the more circular trajectory is⁶⁶. By its self-motion, the dynamic principle – viz. the soul⁶⁷ – communicates motion into sensible realm, without being itself extended or locomotive. Hence, Platonism draws a strong division between two kinds of processes belonging to two separated ontological levels: from one perspective, there is a purely spiritual process without relation to place or extension which is the *psychic* self-motion; and from another, there are sensible motions proceeding from place to place and having quantifiable extension which are *corporeal* movements.

By virtue of this separation between dynamics' and kinematics' realms, namely between the psychic and the corporeal levels, the puzzles about motion objected by Zeno and Diodorus Kronus are less offensive for Platonism, because they deal only with sensible and *extended* motion. Here, Platonism seems to have the advantage over rival Hellenistic physics⁶⁸. Indeed, Plato does not consider every motion results from the affection of a sensible moved by a sensible mover, but rather from a *production* of a sensible and communicated motion by an intelligible and non-extended self-mover. Consequently, given that Zeno's and Diodorus' puzzles are purely kinematic (in the sense according to which they fall under *metrical* or *topological* considerations), and since spiritual dynamics is not in the least degree dependent on kinematics (that is quite the reverse), an orthodox Platonist can ignore those arguments without threatening his theory of self-motion. In contrast to Platonism, for Aristotelianism, kinematics is the condition of dynamics, because all movers are subject to the laws of kinematics⁶⁹, in such a way that Zeno's and Diodorus' puzzles must be neutralized in one way or another.

Moreover, this Platonic distinction between dynamics and kinematics goes with a strong epistemological and ontological thesis, namely that there is always an irrational residue of approximation in all sensible facts. Indeed, Platonism does not split sensible realm into

⁶³ ARISTOTLE, *Phys*, 4.11, 13

⁶⁴ For instance, all the kinematic development in *Laws*, X 893b-898c aims at the self-motion of the dynamic principle.

⁶⁵ J. VUILLEMIN, "The Systems of Plato and Aristotle Compared as to their Contribution to Physics", in W. SPOHN, B. C. VAN FRAASSEN, B. SKYRMS (eds.), *Existence and Explanation. Essays presented in Honor of Karel Lambert*, Springer, 1991, p. 197-206

⁶⁶ PLATO, *Laws*, X 893b-899b (see also: PLOTINUS, *Enneads*, II 2 [14], 1, 2-19; 39-51; 2, 5-27 and, on this text: M. RASHED, "Contre le mouvement rectiligne naturel: trois adversaires (Xénarque, Ptolémée, Plotin) pour une thèse", in R. CHIARADONNA, F. TRABATTONI (eds.), *Physics and Philosophy of Nature in Greek Neoplatonism*, Brill, 2009, p. 34-41)

⁶⁷ PLATO, *Phaedrus*, 245c-e, *Laws*, X 894b, 895c, 895e-896a

⁶⁸ M. RASHED (ed.), *Alexandre d'Aphrodise, Commentaire perdu à la Physique d'Aristote (livres IV-VIII). Les scholies byzantines*, de Gruyter, 2011, p. 83-92, p. 105-113

⁶⁹ J. VUILLEMIN, "The Systems of Plato and Aristotle Compared as to their Contribution to Physics", in W. SPOHN, B. C. VAN FRAASSEN, B. SKYRMS (eds.), *Existence and Explanation. Essays presented in Honor of Karel Lambert*, Springer, 1991, p. 197-201

two very incommensurable parts, as Aristotelianism does by separating perfect and necessary celestial phenomena from imperfect and contingent sublunary phenomena⁷⁰. So, for Platonists, even the astronomical revolutions keep an unknown waste, unlike Aristotle's cosmology. Such an irrational residue is ultimately due to the conjunction of χώρα's paroxysmal and fuzzy instability⁷¹, and imperfections of psychic mover which introduces a supplementary element of disorder and irregularity into sensible realm. Insofar as χώρα's dyadic mutability⁷² and ψυχή's self-motion yield sensible ἀνώμαλα⁷³, kinematics which studies sensible movements is condemned to be an imperfect science, either because an infrasensible effervescence, or because a suprasensible pressure onto a refractory matter. This defective accuracy of kinematics is explicitly claimed by Plato in *Timaeus*⁷⁴, when he declares that his physical exposition is only plausible and not undoubtedly true because a veracity of a science is proportional to its subject's stability and reliability. This unknowledge or irrationality of sensible motion actually explains the irreducibility of the "weirdness"⁷⁵ of ἐξαίφνης: as all sensible events by virtue of their sensibility, the 'instant of change' is not in itself fully understandable.

By virtue of this restriction about kinematics' scientificity, the status of kinematic puzzles is not the same for Platonism and for Aristotelianism. For the first, we must accept that sensible motion implies insoluble puzzles, as the precise nature of 'instant of change', and we should consider that dynamics is in itself more scientific and less aporetic than kinematics, but also more enigmatic for us who sail on sensible water. For the second, because of the predominance of kinematics upon dynamics, and of the rejection of the separated intelligible realm, all motions are sensible, and kinematics must be a genuine science. Admittedly, by virtue of its complex matters, sublunary kinetics is imperfect and has an unknown residue, but it is not the case with the perfect celestial uniform revolutions produced by substance whose matter is reduced to place. Thus there must be a high scientific theory of kinematics to explain them. In other words, Aristotelianism must not admit the insolubility of kinematic puzzles: it is necessary to solve them, since Aristotelianism must save the ontological and epistemological privileges of Heavens' sempiternal items⁷⁶. So, the unicity of *abstract* kinematics which studies all kinematic phenomena wherever they are⁷⁷ involves that kinematic puzzles restricted to sublunary realm (which is the place of rectilinear and non-uniform motions), as the aporia of kinetic starting, must be solved if Aristotelianism wants to preserve the scientificity of astronomy. On the contrary, Platonism, with his doctrine of sensible homogeneity, must not.

⁷⁰ On the principle of the conservation of modal status in Aristotelianism, see: J. VUILLEMIN, *Necessity or Contingency. The Master Argument*, CSLI Publications, 1996, p. 16-17; p. 30 (see also, for the same principle in Platonism: p. 226 n. 3)

⁷¹ PLATO, *Timaeus*, 49b-50a, 52d-53b

⁷² PLATO, *Timaeus*, 57d-58c (see also: *Phaedo*, 110a-114a)

⁷³ PLATO, *Menexenus*, 238e, *Republic*, VIII 547a, *Timaeus*, 52e, 57e, 58a, c, *Laws*, VI 775d

⁷⁴ PLATO, *Timaeus*, 29b-d (see also: *Republic*, VI 511d-e, VII 533e-534a)

⁷⁵ PLATO, *Parmenides*, 156d

⁷⁶ Here, it appears the Aristotelean thesis of ἀλήθεια-φύσις (*Met.*, α 1 993b27-31), see: I. DÜRING, "Aristotle on Ultimate Principles from 'nature and reality'", in *Aristotle and Plato in Mid-fourth century*, *Studia Graeca et Latina Gothoburgensia* XI, 1960, p. 35-55 and M. RASHED, "Alexandre d'Aphrodise, lecteur du *Protreptique*", in *L'héritage aristotélicien*, Les Belles Lettres, 2007, p. 182-191, *Essentialisme. Alexandre d'Aphrodise entre logique, physique et cosmologie*, de Gruyter, 2007, chap. 9, §3, p. 309-323

⁷⁷ However, it must be noted that some cosmological theses of Aristotle dangerously threaten such a unicity of kinematics, for instance the fact that, as Philoponus had pointed, the definition of change seems to be hardly applicable for infinite celestial revolutions, see: H. CHERNISS, *Aristotle's Criticism of Plato and the Academy*, The Johns Hopkins Press, 1944, p. 582-583; L. ROBIN, *Aristote*, puf, 1944, p. 132 and S. WATERLOW, *Nature, Change, and Agency in Aristotle's Physics*, Oxford Clarendon Press, 1982, p. 249-256

Albeit the privilege of kinematics was a characteristic of the majority of Hellenistic schools, as Aristotelianism, Epicureanism and Stoicism, kinematics is just a very inferior science for Platonism which claims that the genuine science of motion is only dynamics⁷⁸, while sensible trajectories must be studied only geometrically, that is to say abstractly to its movable and unknowable aspect⁷⁹. In fact, for Platonism, kinematics' status in the hierarchy of sciences is close to constructive mechanics, namely nonentity⁸⁰. By virtue of this, Plato can stop his analysis of the ἐξάιφνης on the brink of the apparition of its oddity and can do not shed light on it, given that its very nature keeps an irreducible residue of irrationality. Hence also the contrast between Aristotle's elaborated concept of the νῶν and Plato's simple adumbration of the ἐξάιφνης that takes root in their opposite epistemological and ontological underpinnings.

2. FROM PLATO TO EARLY NEOPLATONISM: TAURUS, PLOTINUS AND IAMBlichUS

2.1. The Middle-Platonism and Its Focusing on *Timaeus*: The Case of Taurus

Despite the great number of Platonists from 1st-Century BC to AD 2nd-Century – who are more often and unfortunately known only by few testimonies⁸¹ –, it is very hard to discover in their thoughts an interest in *abstract* kinematics. Indeed, Middle Platonist Physics, in agreement with its *Timaeus*-focusing, is mainly concerned by the debate about the creation or the eternity of the world, by the number of the elements – namely the question whether the aether is a genuine fifth element or not –, by cosmological issues induced by their multi-layered ontology, or by classic and platonizing issues about the soul⁸². As far as I know, only one exception can be found, that is an anecdote about Lucius Calvenus Taurus⁸³ reported by Aulus Gellius in which the Middle Platonist explicitly refers to *Parm.*, 156c-e and deals with the puzzle of 'instant of change' as a *kinematic* problem.

Taurus was a paradigmatic Middle Platonist by virtue of his obvious *Timaeus*-focusing, which historically succeeds the *Theaetetus*-focusing of Arcesilaus and Carneades⁸⁴, and predates the *Parmenides*-focusing characterizing Neoplatonism from Plotinus. By 'x-focusing', here, I simply mean the centre of gravity of their diverse understandings of the

⁷⁸ M. RASHED (ed.), *Alexandre d'Aphrodise, Commentaire perdu à la Physique d'Aristote (livres IV-VIII). Les scholies byzantines*, de Gruyter, 2011, p. 115-116

⁷⁹ PLATO, *Republic*, VII, 527c-d, 528d-530c (kinematics is nothing but the examination of the geometrical figures of the completed movements)

⁸⁰ As the dispute between Speusippus (who supports *Republic*, VII 527a) and Menaechmus shows: G. MOLLAND, "Implicit versus explicit geometrical methodologies: the case of construction", in R. RASHED (ed.), *Mathématiques et philosophie de l'Antiquité à l'âge classique: hommage à Jules Vuillemin*, CNRS, 1991, p. 182-190

⁸¹ Evidences recently gathered in: M.-L. LAKMANN (ed.), *Platonici minores. 1. Jh.v.Chr.-2. Jh.n.Chr. Prosopographie, Fragmente und Testimonien mit deutscher Übersetzung*, Brill, 2017

⁸² For an introduction, see: J. M. DILLON, *The Middle Platonists. A Study of Platonism. 80 B.C. to A.D. 220*, Duckworth, 1977

⁸³ On Taurus, see: F. PETRUCCI, *Taurus of Beirut. The Other Side of Middle-Platonism*, Routledge, 2018

⁸⁴ *Anonymous Prolegomena to Platonic Philosophy*, 10.16-20. See: D. N. SEDLEY, "Three Platonist Interpretations of the *Theaetetus*", in Ch. GILL, M. M. MCCABE (eds.), *Form and Argument in Late Plato*, Oxford Clarendon Press, 1996, p. 85-89; H. TARRANT, "L'importance du Théétète avant Thrasyllé", in D. EL MURR (ed.), *La mesure du savoir. Etudes sur le Théétète de Platon*, Vrin, 2013, p. 250-252. I shall return to this *Theaetetus*-focusing in Carneades in a future paper: "Carneade, in Cicéron, *De fato*, XIV, 31-33: le platonisme dé-volé?"

Corpus Platonicum, which had, of course, varied through the history of Platonism, but without breaking off the deep continuity of their adherence to the Platonic hard core⁸⁵.

The *Timaeus*-focusing of Middle-Platonism⁸⁶, beyond its wealthy variety, is expressed enough by the high number and the high level of Middle-Platonic *full* commentaries on the dialogue: after Cantor who wrote his own before Arcesilaus' fellowship, Derkyllides⁸⁷, Clemens⁸⁸, Gaius⁸⁹, Albinus⁹⁰, Cronius⁹¹, Severus⁹², Harpocration⁹³, and, of course, Taurus⁹⁴ seem to have explained Plato's *Timaeus*. By comparison, the second Platonic dialogue which had been massively commented from 1st-Century BC to AD 2nd-Century is *Republic* – however that commentary is more often only devoted to the Myth of Er (Derkyllides⁹⁵, Gaius⁹⁶, Albinus, Maximus of Nicea, Harpocration, Euclides, Clemens⁹⁷, Cronius⁹⁸, Taurus⁹⁹). Thus, whether the history of the commentaries on *Parmenides* as a key of Plato's Thought (so, after the dialectical reading of Albinus) seems really to have begun from Plotinus – with those of Amelius and Porphyry –, the 'historiography' of *Timaeus* had begun long before.

Taurus' commentary on *Timaeus* had durably influenced the reading of the dialogue, notably on the question whether or not the world had had a beginning, that is to say of its temporal creation¹⁰⁰. For instance, on the one hand, Philoponus, who was a very heterodox Christian, is perfectly aware that he must refute the authority of Taurus in the course of his polemic against Aristotelian and Neoplatonic belief in the eternity of the world¹⁰¹. Indeed, his opponents Porphyry and Proclus had followed Taurus on this point¹⁰² on which the Middle Platonist had distinguished four meanings of the word γενητός to support the view according to which Plato had taught that the world is non-chronologically

⁸⁵ So, of course, this historical thesis involves the rejection of a so-called scepticism in the Middle and New Academies. I expect explaining why in "Carnéade, in Cicéron, *De fato*, XIV, 31-33: le platonisme dé-voilé?"

⁸⁶ By the way, a quick look on the 'Index of Platonic Passages' or 'Index Locorum' of whichever monography on Middle-Platonism is enough to notice this *Timaeus*-focusing. For instance, see: J. M. DILLON, *The Middle Platonists. A Study of Platonism. 80 B.C. to A.D. 220*, Duckworth, 1977, p. 428

⁸⁷ PROCLUS, *In Tim*, I 20.9-11

⁸⁸ See: M.-L. LAKMANN (ed.), *Platonici minores*, Brill, 2017, p. 151, p. 558-559

⁸⁹ PROCLUS, *In Tim*, I 340.23-341.4

⁹⁰ PROCLUS, *In Tim*, I 340.23-341.4

⁹¹ PROCLUS, *In Remp*, II 22.20-23.5

⁹² PROCLUS, *In Tim*, I 204.16-18

⁹³ Scholium on Proclus, *In Tim*, II 377.15-27; PROCLUS, *In Tim*, I 304.22-305.7 (see: M.-L. LAKMANN (ed.), *Platonici minores*, Brill, 2017, p. 123, p. 484-485 and J. M. DILLON, "Harpocration's 'Commentary on Plato': Fragments of a Middle Platonic Commentary", in *California Studies in Classical Antiquity*, 4, 1971, p. 125-146)

⁹⁴ Fragments of his commentary are available in: M.-L. LAKMANN, *Der Platoniker Tauros in der Darstellung des Aulus Gellius*, Brill, 1995, p. 248-257 and M.-L. LAKMANN (ed.), *Platonici minores*, Brill, 2017, p. 736-757

⁹⁵ THEON OF SMYRNA, *On Mathematics Useful for the Understanding of Plato*, 198.9-202.7 (see: M.-L. LAKMANN (ed.), *Platonici minores*, Brill, 2017, p. 98, p. 426-427)

⁹⁶ PROCLUS, *In Remp*, II 96.10-15

⁹⁷ See: M.-L. LAKMANN (ed.), *Platonici minores*, Brill, 2017, p. 151, p. 558-559

⁹⁸ PROCLUS, *In Remp*, II 110.2-7

⁹⁹ See: M.-L. LAKMANN (ed.), *Platonici minores*, Brill, 2017, p. 241, p. 736-737

¹⁰⁰ Debate based on PLATO, *Timaeus*, 27c-28c

¹⁰¹ J. PHILOPONUS, *De aeternitate mundi contra Proclum*, 121.18-21, 123.15-23, 145.1-147.9, 186.17-189.9, 191.15-193.9, 223.1-224.12, 520.4-521.25

¹⁰² J. PHILOPONUS, *De aeternitate mundi contra Proclum*, 144.16-145.8, 147.25-148.7 (see: PROCLUS, *In Tim*, I 279.30-296.12 (see also: 276.30-277.32))

‘created’¹⁰³: (1) either insofar as the sensible world belongs to the same genus as things that are really created – namely the genus of ‘sensible being’ –, (2) or, in a more Neopythagorean fashion¹⁰⁴, insofar as the world is theoretically composite even if it has not in fact combined, (3) or insofar as the sensible world is always in process of γένεσις on the contrary to the intelligible realm, (4) or insofar as the sensible world is *ontologically* dependent on its outside source, namely God. It appears that meanings 3 and 4 have been adopted by Alkinoos¹⁰⁵ and Proclus¹⁰⁶, meanings 2 and 4 by Albinus¹⁰⁷ and Porphyry¹⁰⁸, meaning 4 by Calcidius¹⁰⁹, and meaning 1 has been favoured by Apuleius¹¹⁰. But, on the other, Philoponus is also aware that he can take advantage of the authority of Taurus on another point, namely on the rejection of aether as a real fifth element¹¹¹. Ironically, Philoponus uses this second thesis of Taurus for justifying his denial of the first¹¹².

Albeit Taurus was undoubtedly very influential in the exegesis of *Timaeus*, the situation is quite different in regard of his importance on the interpretation of *Parmenides*. By the way, he did not write a commentary on this dialogue, and only one testimony keeps a record of its Taurus’ reading, namely the dinner-anecdote presented below. This anecdote about Taurus is found in Aulus Gellius’ *Noctes Atticae* (7.13)¹¹³ whose text is as follows:

Quaesitum est, quando moriens moreretur? cum iam in morte esset, an cum etiamtum in vita foret; et quando surgens surgeret? cum iam staret, an cum etiamtum sederet? et qui artem disceret, quando artifex fieret? cum iam esset, an cum etiamtum non esset. Utrum enim horum dices, absurde atque ridicule dixeris, multoque absurdius videbitur, si aut utrumque esse dicas aut neutrum.

Sed ea omnia cum captiones esse quidam

The question was asked, when a dying man died – when he was already in the grasp of death, or while he still lived? And when did a rising man rise – when he was already standing, or while he was still seated? And when did one who was learning an art become an artist – when he already was one, or when he was still learning? For whichever answer you make, your statement will be absurd, if you say either ‘both’ or ‘neither’.

¹⁰³ J. M. DILLON, *The Middle Platonists. A Study of Platonism. 80 B.C. to A.D. 220*, Duckworth, 1977, p. 242-246, R. SORABJI, *Time, creation and the continuum*, Duckworth, 1983, p. 268-276 and, for Middle Platonism: C. MORESCHINI, *Apuleius and the Metamorphoses of Platonism*, Brepols, 2015, p. 265-279. On the Islamic transmission of this classification, see: M. RASHED, “Nouveaux fragments antiprocliens de Philopon en version arabe et le problème des origines de la théorie de l’‘instauration’ (hudūth)”, in *Les Etudes philosophiques*, 2013-2, p. 261-292

¹⁰⁴ STOBÆUS, *Anthology*, I 186.14

¹⁰⁵ ALKINOOS, *Didaskalikos*, §14.3 (see: J. M. DILLON (ed.), *Alcinous. The Handbook of Platonism*, Oxford Clarendon Press, 1993, p. 123-125)

¹⁰⁶ J. PHILOPONUS, *De aeternitate mundi contra Proclum*, 166.26-167.2

¹⁰⁷ PROCLUS, *In Tim*, I 219.1-12

¹⁰⁸ J. PHILOPONUS, *De aeternitate mundi contra Proclum*, 149.16-21

¹⁰⁹ CALCIDIUS, *In Tim*, §23

¹¹⁰ APULEIUS, *De Platone et eius Dogmate*, I 8.198

¹¹¹ J. PHILOPONUS, *De aeternitate mundi contra Proclum*, 520.4-521.25

¹¹² Especially in the *Contra Aristotelem*. On the link between the two theses, see: R. SORABJI (ed.), *Philoponus and the Rejection of Aristotelian Science*, Cornell University Press, 1987, p. 25, M. RASHED, “The Problem of the Composition of the Heavens (529-1610): A New Fragment of Philoponus and its Readers”, in P. ADAMSON, H. BALTUSSEN, P. STONE, *Philosophy, Science and Exegesis in Greek, Arabic and Latin Commentaries*, Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies, suppl. vol. 83, 2004, p. 35-56 and Ch. WILDBERG, *John Philoponus’ Criticism of Aristotle’s Theory of Aether*, de Gruyter, 1988

¹¹³ On this passage, see: J. M. DILLON, *The Middle Platonists. A Study of Platonism. 80 B.C. to A.D. 220*, Duckworth, 1977, p. 246; M.-L. LAKMANN, *Der Platoniker Tauros in der Darstellung des Aulus Gellius*, Brill, 1995, p. 72-81 and N. STROBACH, *The Moment of Change. A Systematic History in the Philosophy of Space and Time*, Springer, 1998, p. 41-42

futiles atque inanes dicerent, “Nolite” inquit Taurus, “haec quasi nugarum aliquem ludum aspernari. Gravissimi philosophorum super hac re serio quaesiverunt¹¹⁴; et alii moriendi verbum atque momentum manente adhuc vita dici atque fieri putaverunt, alii nihil in eo tempore vitae reliquerunt totumque illud, quod mori dicitur, morti vindicaverunt; item de ceteris similibus in diversa tempora et in contrarias sententias discesserunt. Sed Plato,” inquit, “noster neque vitae id tempus neque morti dedit, idemque in omni consilium rerum disceptatione fecit. Vidit quippe utrumque esse pugnant neque posse ex duobus contrariis altero manente, alterum constitui quaestionemque fieri per diversorum inter se finium mortis et vitae cohaerentiam, et idcirco peperit ipse expressitque aliud quoddam novum in confinio tempus, quod verbis propriis atque integris τὴν ἐξαίφνης φύσιν appellavit, idque ipsum ita, uti dico,” inquit, “in libra, cui *Parmenides* titulus est, scriptum ab eo reperietis.”¹¹⁵

But when some declared that all these questions were pointless and idle sophisms, Taurus said: “Do not despise such problems, as if they were mere trifling amusements. The most earnest of the philosophers have seriously debated this question. Some have thought that the term ‘die’ was properly used, and that the moment of death came, while life still remained; others have left no life in that moment, but have claimed for death all that period which is termed ‘dying’. Also in regard to other similar problems they have argued for different times and maintained opposite opinions. But our master Plato”, said he, “assigned that time neither to life nor to death, and took the same position in every discussion of similar questions. For he saw that the alternatives were mutually contrary, that one of the two opposites could not be maintained while the other existed, and that the question arose from the juxtaposition of two opposing extremes, namely life and death. Therefore, he himself devised, and gave a name to, a new *stuff* of time, lying on the boundary between the two, which he called in appropriate and exact language τὴν ἐξαίφνης φύσιν; and this very term, as I have given it,” said he, “you will find used by him in the dialogue entitled *Parmenides*.”¹¹⁶

Here, Taurus alludes to the very fashionable case of the instant of death to show the superiority of Plato’s ἐξαίφνης. Perhaps Taurus, here, had additionally in mind a passage of *Gorgias* in which Plato briefly mentions the ἐξαίφνης of *dying* which coincides with the separation of the soul from the body¹¹⁷. Since Taurus had fully explained this dialogue¹¹⁸, he might have commented *Gorg*, 523e by referring to Plato’s solution found in *Parm*, 156c-d, and perhaps might have seized the opportunity for discussing Hellenistic alternative solutions too. Indeed, as Rashed has argued¹¹⁹, this question of the instant of death is far to be trivial, but was a critical point in Hellenistic polemics on the continuum and *kinematics*. And precisely, Taurus said to his guests that this puzzle is not just a sophistic puerility but a very important query which had been examined by the most earnest philosophers. So, Taurus surely had in mind the Hellenistic debate on the death of Dion¹²⁰, and the discussions on the ‘instant of change’. This is demonstrated enough by his quick overview of the various rejected solutions which is occurring in two parts:

¹¹⁴ See: AULUS GELLIUS, *Noctes Atticae*, 6.21

¹¹⁵ AULUS GELLIUS, *Noctes Atticae*, 6.21 5-12

¹¹⁶ English translation (modified): J. C. ROLFE (ed.), *The Attic Nights of Aulus Gellius*, vol. 2, Harvard University Press, 1927, p. 124-127

¹¹⁷ PLATO, *Gorgias*, 523e2-6: καὶ τὸν κριτὴν δεῖ γυμνὸν εἶναι, τεθνεῶτα, αὐτῇ τῇ ψυχῇ αὐτὴν τὴν ψυχὴν θεωροῦντα ἐξαίφνης ἀποθανόντος ἐκάστου, ἐρημον πάντων τῶν συγγενῶν καὶ καταλιπόντα ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς πάντα ἐκεῖνον τὸν κόσμον, ἵνα δικάιᾳ ἡ κρίσις ᾖ.

¹¹⁸ AULUS GELLIUS, *Noctes Atticae*, 7.14 5

¹¹⁹ M. RASHED (ed.), *Alexandre d’Aphrodise, Commentaire perdu à la Physique d’Aristote (livres IV-VIII). Les scholies byzantines*, de Gruyter, 2011, p. 109-113

¹²⁰ M.-L. LAKMANN, *Der Platoniker Tauros in der Darstellung des Aulus Gellius*, Brill, 1995, p. 77-78

Utrum enim horum dices, absurde atque ridicule dixeris, multoque absurdus videbitur, si **aut utrumque** esse dicas **aut neutrum**.

[...]

Gravissimi philosophorum super hac re serio quaesiverunt; **et alii moriendi verbum atque momentum manente adhuc vita dici atque fieri putaverunt, alii nihil in eo tempore vitae reliquerunt totumque illud, quod mori dicitur, morti vindicaverunt**; item de ceteris similibus in diversa tempora et in contrarias sententias discesserunt.

Rejection of the Both-states-option and of the *neither/nor*-option at once: the first targets certainly Stoicism, the second weirdly seems to target Plato himself.¹²¹

Rejection of the *either/or*-option: the targets are probably either Peripatetic thinkers or Dialecticians or both.

Afterwards, Taurus introduces Plato's answer with a reasoning for sustaining it: since all other alternatives are meaningless, there remains only one understandable answer, namely the *neither/nor*-option. It seems very odd that Aulus Gellius reports Plato's solution, whereas he has rejected few words before the *neutrum*-option. Of course, Aulus Gellius, whom the philosophical capacity is dubious, surely did not know a lot about the puzzle he reports, and we should not be too confident in his record.

The fact remains that Taurus still considers, as Plato did, ἐξαίφνης as a notion which merely belongs to kinematics. Besides, its logical and ontological status are rigorously circumscribed, since Taurus seems to say that the 'sudden' belongs to the set of temporal entities (*quoddam novum in confinio tempus*), namely a kind of boundary (*confinium*), which is neither in A-state nor in ¬A-state, in such a way that Taurus' exegesis is absolutely in agreement with the common view defended above¹²². Thus, there is at least one Platonist reader of Plato who had been perfectly aware of the kinematic background of ἐξαίφνης from 1st-Century BC to AD 2nd-Century.

Yet, perhaps Taurus was not the only Middle Platonist who alludes to ἐξαίφνης, the topic of 'instant of change' can be found notably in Apuleius¹²³ (who maybe was a pupil of Taurus, as Dillon has suggested¹²⁴), albeit in a more encrypted way. But the fact is that, contrary to Taurus, Apuleius had mentioned this point into a moral framework, namely about the progress toward virtue and wisdom¹²⁵.

Eum qui per haec profectus fidenti et securo gradu virtutis via graderetur, adeptum solidam vivendi rationem, **repente fieri perfectum; hunc repente praeteriti futurique aevi ultimas partes adtingere et esse quodammodo intemporalem**.¹²⁶

The one who, after such a departure, walks with a confident and assured step in the path of virtue, in possession of an unshakable rule of life, **suddenly becomes perfect; it suddenly reaches the extreme limits of the past and the future and is, as it were, timeless**.

¹²¹ N. STROBACH, *The Moment of Change. A Systematic History in the Philosophy of Space and Time*, Springer, 1998, p. 42

¹²² N. STROBACH, *The Moment of Change. A Systematic History in the Philosophy of Space and Time*, Springer, 1998, p. 41-42

¹²³ M.-L. LAKMANN, *Der Platoniker Tauros in der Darstellung des Aulus Gellius*, Brill, 1995, p. 78 n.25

¹²⁴ J. M. DILLON, *The Middle Platonists. A Study of Platonism. 80 B.C. to A.D. 220*, Duckworth, 1977, p. 306-308, p. 338

¹²⁵ Nothing can put us in mind that the Middle Platonists refer to *Laws*, III 678b5-c1 when they discuss this point.

¹²⁶ APULEIUS, *De Platone et eius Dogmate*, II 20.248 (On the authorship of this essay, see the overview in: J. D. REDFORS, *Echtheitskritische Untersuchung der Apuleien Schriften*

Whether Apuleius had in mind *Parm.*, 156c-d, then his reading is quite different from Taurus on the ontological status of the ‘sudden’ which Apuleius describes as ‘timeless’ (*intemporalis*). However, Apuleius might have in mind a Stoic doctrine rather than Plato’s *Parmenides*¹²⁷. Indeed, Plutarch informs us that Stoics believe that it is possible for a new wise man does not realize that he has reached perfection¹²⁸, precisely because *becoming* a sage can be imperceptible and happen *instantaneously*¹²⁹, in such a way that the final transition toward wisdom can be unnoticeable for the new wise himself. Such a Stoic thesis was, of course, weightily mocked by Plutarch. But a textual fact should be remarked and makes the exegesis a little more complex, namely that Plutarch was using the word ἐξαίφνης when he displayed the controversial Stoic position:

καὶ γὰρ ἀκαρεὶ χρόνου καὶ ὥρας ἐκ τῆς ὥς ἐνι
μάλιστα φανλότητος εἰς οὐκ ἔχουσιν
ὑπερβολὴν ἀρετῆς διάθεσιν μεταβάλων ὁ
σοφός, ἥς οὐδ’ ἐν χρόνῳ πολλῷ μέρος ἀφεῖλε
κακίας, ἅμα πᾶσαν ἐξαίφνης ἐκπέφευγε.¹³⁰

Why, if this be so, the wise man in a moment or a laps of time changes from the lowest possible depravity to an unsurpassable state of virtue; and all his vice, of which he has not in long years succeeded in removing even a small portion, he **suddenly** leaves behind for ever.¹³¹

Surprisingly, when Plutarch was challenging with the paradoxes of time and change in another essay, he did not allude to Plato’s ἐξαίφνης¹³². How must be interpreted this state of affairs? Perhaps here ἐξαίφνης is a *terminus mysticus* rather than a *terminus technicus*, more precisely an *ironic* one. By using a Platonic word to describe a Stoic thesis, Plutarch would play with his habitual tendency to sarcasm (like if he had said: ‘Gosh, Stoics believe that becoming wise happens very suddenly, so *as a miracle*’). Furthermore, in spite of an obvious syncretism¹³³, since none of Apuleius’ evidences can really put us in mind that he had a radical and conscious inclination toward Stoicism to the detriment of Platonic ‘orthodoxy’, Apuleius’ parallel seems rather to highlight that the Platonic text which Plutarch and him have in mind is rather one of some passages in which Plato was talking about a ‘sudden acquisition/loss of knowledge’¹³⁴ or one of the two ‘mystical’ passages I shall present in length below¹³⁵ than *Parm.*, 156c-d. In this case, the ‘atemporality’ (*intemporalis*) attributed to the wise man by Apuleius might result from a kind of

De Platone und De mundo, Lund, 1960, p. 75-117 and G. BARRA, “La questione dell’autenticità del ‘De Platone et eius dogmate’ e del ‘De mundo’ di Apuleio”, in *Rendiconti dell’Accademia di Archeologia, Lettere et Belle Arti di Napoli*, 41, 1966, p. 127-188)

¹²⁷ J. M. DILLON, *The Middle Platonists. A Study of Platonism. 80 B.C. to A.D. 220*, Duckworth, 1977, p. 335 and C. MORESCHINI, *Apuleio et il platonismo*, Leo S. Olschki, 1978, p. 121-123, *Apuleius and the Metamorphoses of Platonism*, Brepols, 2015, p. 325-326

¹²⁸ PLUTARCH, *De communibus notitiis adversus Stoicos*, 1062b

¹²⁹ PLUTARCH, *Quomodo quis suos in virtute sentiat profectus*, 75c-d

¹³⁰ PLUTARCH, *Quomodo quis suos in virtute sentiat profectus*, 75c-d

¹³¹ English translation: F. C. BABBITT (ed.), *Plutarch’s Moralia in Sixteen Volumes*, Harvard University Press, vol. 1, 1927, p. 403

¹³² PLUTARCH, *De E Delphico*, 392a-393c

¹³³ Ph. MERLAN, “Greek Philosophy from Plato to Plotinus”, in A. H. ARMSTRONG (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, 1967, p. 64-73 and C. MORESCHINI, *Apuleius and the Metamorphoses of Platonism*, Brepols, 2015, p. 191. On the ‘eclecticism’ of Middle-Platonism, see: J. M. DILLON, “‘Orthodoxy’ and ‘Eclecticism’: Middle Platonists and New-Pythagoreans”, in J. M. DILLON, A. A. LONG (eds.), *The Question of ‘Eclecticism’. Studies in Later Greek Philosophy*, University of California Press, 1988, p. 103-125

¹³⁴ PLATO, *Cratylus*, 391a1, 396b4, c7, d3, *Theaetetus*, 162c3, 203e1

¹³⁵ PLATO, *Symposium*, 210e, *Seventh Letter*, 341c

connection or union with the intelligible realm¹³⁶ rather than being a characterization of ἐξαίφνης. Nevertheless, Apuleius had maybe consciously matched those Platonic passages with the Stoic doctrine tackled by Plutarch. Thus, according to Apuleius' and Plutarch's testimonies, Middle-Platonism's 'mystical' understanding of ἐξαίφνης foreshadows forcefully Plotinus and Iamblichus' readings.

2.2. Plotinus and Iamblichus: Predominance of the 'Mystical' ἐξαίφνης from Symposium and Seventh Letter

Indeed, when Plotinus and, to a lesser extent, Iamblichus employed the word ἐξαίφνης in their works, that is never into a kinematic background in which the puzzle of the 'instant of change' can rear its head. Quite the reverse, ἐξαίφνης appears in contexts very far from the sensible world and sensible motion, namely when Plotinus and Iamblichus were alluding to the highest level of their henologies, beyond being and intellect. So, they likely follow another Platonic text than *Parm.*, 156c-d.

2.2.1. The Platonic 'mystical' Texts

The fact is that apart the Platonic passages in which ἐξαίφνης was used as a very common word without real *technical* or *mystical* connotation¹³⁷, there are two kinds of non-kinetic meanings for the 'sudden': the suddenness of mystic vision of the Idea and the suddenness of the acquisition or loss of knowledge. These two kinds of meanings, the 'mystical' and the 'epistemological', are actually not two separate and hermetic senses, as it is shown enough by the uncanny resemblance between *Seventh Letter*, 341c on the one hand, and *Cratylus*, 396c-d and *Theaetetus*, 162c on the other. Yet, that is useful to pull apart the passages in which Plato (or Ps.-Plato¹³⁸) was explicitly talking about the Intelligible realm or, even, beyond (i.e. about the One-Good-Beauty) from the passages in which Plato had something else in mind, more often a sarcastic or ironic literary effect ('Gosh, I'm suddenly very smart. It happens like a miracle, right? Maybe, I'm a prophet now.').

The suddenness of mystic vision

Symposium, 210e2-211a2: ὃς γὰρ ἂν μέχρι ἐνταῦθα πρὸς τὰ ἐρωτικά παιδαγωγηθῇ, θεώμενος ἐφεξῆς τε καὶ ὀρθῶς τὰ καλὰ, πρὸς τέλος ἤδη ἰὼν τῶν ἐρωτικῶν ἐξαίφνης κατόψεται τι θαυμαστὸν τὴν φύσιν καλόν, τοῦτο ἐκεῖνο, ὃ Σώκρατες, οὐ δὴ ἔνεκεν καὶ οἱ

When a man has been thus far tutored in the lore of love, passing from view to view of beautiful things, in the right and regular ascent, **suddenly** he will have revealed to him, as he draws to the close of his dealings in love, a wondrous vision, beautiful in its nature; and

¹³⁶ J. M. DILLON, *The Middle Platonists. A Study of Platonism. 80 B.C. to A.D. 220*, Duckworth, 1977, p. 335

¹³⁷ This absence of mystical connotation should obviously be highly qualified, because in these passages Plato employs consciously this word to produce a certain kind of literary effect, for instance either for pastiching some literary styles or literary genres, or for laughing at some characters: PLATO, *Symposium*, 212c6, 213c1 (the 'sudden' coming of the beautiful Alcibiades is obviously linked to the 'sudden' mystical vision of beauty of 210e4), 223b2 (last degradation of the mystical 'sudden', since many drunk revellers are 'suddenly' coming at Agathon's banquet after Socrates' speech about beauty and after the speech of the beautiful Alcibiades about Socrates. Thus, Alcibiades, by virtue of his physical beauty, seems to be a kind of caricature of the Idea of Beauty, and the revellers caricature themselves, by their drunkenness, the behaviour of Alcibiades). Other occurrences of ἐξαίφνης without explicit connotations: *Republic*, V 453c7, 472a1, VII 515c6, 516a4, e5 (Allegory of the Cave: those occurrences need more attention), VIII 553a10, IX 584b7, X 615d6, 621b6, *Parmenides*, 164d3, *Statesman*, 291b7, *Laws*, II 665b4, IV 712e4, VII 758d4, XII 994b2

¹³⁸ See: M. BURNYEAT, M. FREDE, *The Seventh Platonic Letter. A Seminar*, Oxford University Press, 2015

ἐμπροσθεν πάντες πόνοι ἦσαν, πρῶτον μὲν αἰὲν οὐ καὶ οὔτε γιγνόμενον οὔτε ἀπολλύμενον, οὔτε αὐξανόμενον οὔτε φθίνον...

this, Socrates, is the final object of all those previous toils. First at all, it is ever-existent and neither comes to be nor perishes, neither waxes nor wanes...¹³⁹

Seventh Letter, 341c5-d2: ῥητὸν γὰρ οὐδαμῶς ἐστὶν ὡς ἄλλα μαθήματα, ἀλλ' ἐκ πολλῆς συνουσίας γιγνομένης περὶ τὸ πρᾶγμα αὐτὸ καὶ τοῦ συζῆν ἐξαίφνης, οἷον ἀπὸ πυρὸς πηδήσαντος ἐξαφθὲν φῶς, ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ γενόμενον αὐτὸ ἐαυτὸ ἤδη τρέφει.

For it does not at all admit of verbal expression like other studies, but, as a result of continued application to the subject itself and communion therewith, it is brought to **suddenly** birth in the soul, as light that is kindled by a leaping spark, and thereafter it nourishes itself.¹⁴⁰

The suddenness of the acquisition/loss of knowledge

Cratylus, 396b3-d3: ΣΩ. τοῦτον δὲ Κρόνον ὕὸν ὑβριστικὸν μὲν ἂν τις δόξειεν εἶναι ἀκούσαντι ἐξαίφνης, εὐλογον δὲ μεγάλης τινὸς διανοίας ἐκγονον εἶναι τὸν Δία· κόρον γὰρ σημαίνει οὐ παῖδα, ἀλλὰ τὸ καθαρὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀκίρατον τοῦ νοῦ. ἔστι δὲ οὗτος Οὐρανοῦ ὕός, ὡς λόγος· ἡ δὲ αὐτὸς ἐξ ὧν ὅσιν καλῶς ἔχει τοῦτο τὸ ὄνομα καλεῖσθαι, 'οὐρανία,' ὁρῶσα τὰ ἄνω, ὅθεν δὴ καὶ φασιν, ὃ Ἑρμόγενης, τὸν καθαρὸν νοῦν παραγίνεσθαι οἱ μετεωρολόγοι, καὶ τῷ οὐρανῷ ὁρθῶς τὸ ὄνομα κεῖσθαι· εἰ δ' ἐμνησθῇ τὴν Ἡσιόδου γενεαλογίαν, τίνας ἔτι τοὺς ἀνωτέρω προγόνους λέγει τούτων, οὐκ ἂν ἐπανόμην διεξιὼν ὡς ὁρθῶς αὐτοῖς τὰ ὀνόματα κεῖται, ἕως ἀπεπειράθην τῆς σοφίας ταυτησὶ τί ὀνόματα κεῖται, ἕως ἀπεπειράθην τῆς σοφίας ταυτησὶ τί ποιήσει, εἰ ἄρα ἀπερεῖ ἢ οὐ, ἢ ἐμοὶ ἐξαίφνης νῦν οὕτως προσπέπτωκεν ἄρτι οὐκ οἶδ' ὁπόθεν.

ΕΡΜ. Καὶ μὲν δὴ, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἀτεχνῶς γέ μοι δοκεῖς ὥσπερ οἱ ἐνθουσιῶντες ἐξαίφνης χρησμοδεῖν.

SOCR. And it might seem, at first hearing [litt. **suddenly** hearing], highly irreverent to call him the son of Cronus and reasonable to say that Zeus is the offspring of some great intellect; and so he is, for κόρος (for Κρόνος) signifies not child, but the purity (καθαρόν) and unblemished nature of his mind. And Cronus, according to tradition, is the son of Uranus; but the upward gaze is rightly called by the name urania (οὐρανία), looking at the things above (ὀρῶ τὰ ἄνω), and the astronomers say, Hermogenes, that from this looking people acquire a pure mind, and Uranus is correctly named. If I remembered the genealogy of Hesiod and the still earlier ancestors of the gods he mentions, I would have gone on examining the correctness of their names until I had made a complete trial whether this wisdom which has **suddenly** come to me, I know not whence, will fail or not.

HERM. Indeed, Socrates, you do seem to me **suddenly** to be uttering oracles, exactly like an inspired prophet.¹⁴¹

Theaetetus, 162c2-6: λέγε δὴ, ὦ Θεαίτητε, πρῶτον μὲν ἂ νυνδὴ διήλθομεν, ἄρα οὐ σὺ θαυμάζεις εἰ ἐξαίφνης οὕτως ἀναφανήση μηδὲν χείρων εἰς σοφίαν ὅτουσιν ἀνθρώπων ἢ καὶ θεῶν; ἢ ἡττόν τι οἶε τὸ Πρωταγόρειον μέτρον εἰς θεοὺς ἢ εἰς ἀνθρώπους λέγεσθαι;

Tell me, Theaetetus, referring to the doctrine we have just expounded, do you not share my amazement at being **suddenly** exalted to an equality with the wisest man, or even god? Or do you think Protagoras' 'measure' applies any less to gods than to men?¹⁴²

¹³⁹ English translation: W. R. M. LAMB (ed.), *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, Harvard University Press, vol. 3, 1925, p. 205

¹⁴⁰ English translation: R. G. BURY (ed.), *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, Harvard University Press, vol. 7, 1929, p. 531

¹⁴¹ English translation: H. N. FOWLER (ed.), *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, Harvard University Press, vol. 4, 1926, p. 49

¹⁴² English translation: H. N. FOWLER (ed.), *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, Harvard University Press, vol. 7, 1921, p. 79

Theaetetus, 203d7-e1: ΣΩ. Ἀλλὰ μέντοι εἴ γε ἀνάγκη ἐκάτερον γινώσκειν, εἴπερ ἀμφοτέραι τις γνώσεται, προγινώσκειν τὰ στοιχεῖα ἅπανα ἀνάγκη τῷ μέλλοντί ποτε γνώσεσθαι συλλαβὴν, καὶ οὕτως ἡμῖν ὁ καλὸς λόγος ἀποδεδρακῶς οἰχίσεται.
ΘΕΑΙ. Καὶ μάλα γε ἐξαίφνης.

SOCR. And yet if a knowledge of each letter is necessary before one can know both, he who is ever to know a syllable must certainly know the letters first, and so our fine theory will have run away and vanished!
THEAET. And very **suddenly**, too.¹⁴³

2.2.2. Plotinus and the ‘suddenness’ of the coming of the One

Except the passages in which Plotinus just considers a durationless switch without any consideration on the nature of ἐξαίφνης¹⁴⁴, all his uses of this word are explicitly focused on the ‘sudden’ apparition of the One. Moreover, in those cases, the coming of the One is often illustrated by the metaphor of a flash of light. Of course, such a metaphor to exemplify the ‘suddenness’ of change is very commonplace¹⁴⁵, but there is no doubt about the fact that Plotinus had in mind the two ‘mystical’ Platonic texts in which the ἐξαίφνης is directly linked to a ‘mystic experience’ of the transcendent realm understood as an illumination. In particular, given that Plotinus reserves the ‘sudden’ for describing the coming of the One (he never uses this word when he talks about the Intellect), he refers rather to *Symposium*, 210e in which Diotima teaches Socrates how to climb up the steps toward the highest principle (the Beauty-One). A sign of this focusing on *Symposium* can also be found in Porphyry, since when he tells us the mystical experiences of Plotinus, Porphyry directly makes the connection with Diotima’s speech¹⁴⁶.

V 3 [49], 17.28-32: Τότε δὲ χρὴ ἐωρακέναι πιστεύειν, ὅταν ἡ ψυχὴ ἐξαίφνης φῶς λάβῃ· τοῦτο γάρ – [τοῦτο τὸ φῶς] – παρ’ αὐτοῦ καὶ αὐτός· καὶ τότε χρὴ νομίζειν παρῆναι, ὅταν ὥσπερ θεὸς ἄλλος [ᾧ] εἰς οἶκον καλοῦντός τινος ἐλθὼν φωτίσῃ· ἢ μὴδ’ ἐλθὼν οὐκ ἐφώτισεν.

One must believe one has seen, when the soul **suddenly** takes light: for this is from him [i.e. the One] and he is it; we must think that he is present when, like another god whom someone called to his house, he comes and brings light to us; for if he had not come, he would not have brought the light.¹⁴⁷

V 5 [32], 3.12-15: ἐφ’ ἅπασιν δὲ τούτοις βασιλεὺς προφαίνεται ἐξαίφνης αὐτὸς ὁ μέγας, οἱ δ’ εὐχονται καὶ προσκυνοῦσιν, ὅσοι μὴ προσηλθόντες ἀρκεσθέντες τοῖς πρὸ τοῦ βασιλέως ὀφθεῖσιν.

and after all these [i.e. the Soul and the Intellect] the great king himself [i.e. the One] is **suddenly** revealed and the people pray and prostrate themselves before him – those at least who have not gone away beforehand, satisfied with what they saw before the coming of the king.¹⁴⁸

V 5 [32], 7.31-35: Οὕτω δὲ καὶ νοῦς αὐτὸν ἀπὸ τῶν ἄλλων καλύψας καὶ συναγαγὼν εἰς τὸ εἶσω μὴδὲν ὁρῶν θεάσεται οὐκ ἄλλο ἐν ἄλλῳ φῶς, ἀλλ’ αὐτὸ καθ’ ἑαυτὸ μόνον

Just so Intellect, veiling itself from other things and drawing itself inward, when it is not looking at anything will see a light, not a distinct light in something different from itself,

¹⁴³ English translation: H. N. FOWLER (ed.), *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, Harvard University Press, vol. 7, 1921, p. 229-231

¹⁴⁴ PLOTINUS, *Enneads*, II 9 [33], 9.53, III 1 [3], 1.17, III 2 [47], 4.42, IV 6 [41], 3.37, V 8 [31], 7.14

¹⁴⁵ For instance, see: SEXTUS EMPIRICUS, *PH*, I 141-142; SIMPLICIUS, *In De Caelo*, 119.28-29

¹⁴⁶ PORPHYRY, *Life of Plotinus*, 23

¹⁴⁷ English translation: A. H. ARMSTRONG (ed.), *Plotinus in Seven Volumes*, Harvard University Press, vol. 5, 1984, p. 133-135

¹⁴⁸ English translation: A. H. ARMSTRONG (ed.), *Plotinus in Seven Volumes*, Harvard University Press, vol. 5, 1984, p. 165

καθαρὸν ἐφ’ αὐτοῦ ἐξαίφνης φανέν, ὥστε ἀπορεῖν ὅθεν ἐφάνη, ἐξωθεν ἢ ἔνδον, καὶ ἀπελθόντος εἰπεῖν “ἔνδον ἄρα ἦν καὶ οὐκ ἔνδον αὖ”.

but **suddenly** appearing, alone, by itself in independent purity [the One], so that Intellect is at a loss to know whence it has appeared, whether it has come from outside or within, and after it has gone away will say “It was within, and yet it was not within”.¹⁴⁹

VI 7 [38], 34.8-14: “Ὅταν δὲ τούτου εὐτυχίῃ ἡ ψυχὴ καὶ ἦκη πρὸς αὐτήν, μᾶλλον δὲ παρὸν φανῇ, ὅταν ἐκείνη ἐκνεύσῃ τῶν παρόντων καὶ παρασκευάσασα αὐτήν ὥς ὅτι μάλιστα καλὴν καὶ εἰς ὁμοιότητα ἐλθοῦσα – ἡ δὲ παρασκευὴ καὶ ἡ κόσμησις δῆλη που τοῖς παρασκευαζομένοις – ἰδοῦσα δὲ ἐν αὐτῇ ἐξαίφνης φανέντα – μεταξὺ γὰρ οὐδὲν οὐδ’ ἔτι δύο, ἀλλ’ ἐν ἅμφω· οὐ γὰρ ἂν διακρίναις ἔτι, ἕως πάρεστι· μίμησις δὲ τούτου καὶ οἱ ἐνταῦθα ἐρασταὶ καὶ ἐρώμενοι συγκρίναι θέλοντες...

But when the soul has good fortune with it [i.e. the Good-One], and it comes to it, or rather, being there already, appears, when that soul turns away from the things that are there, and has prepared by making itself as beautiful as possible and has come to likeness (the preparation and the adornment are clearly understood, I think, by those who are preparing themselves) and it sees it in itself **suddenly** appearing (for there is nothing between, nor are there still two but both are one; nor could you still make a distinction while it is present; lovers and their beloveds here below imitate this in their will to be united)...¹⁵⁰

VI 7 [38], 36, 15-21: “Ἐνθα δὲ ἔσας τις πᾶν μάθημα, καὶ μέχρι τοῦ παιδαγωγηθεὶς καὶ ἐν καλῷ ἰδρυθεὶς, ἐν ᾧ μὲν ἐστὶ, μέχρι τούτου νοεῖ, ἐξενεχθεὶς δὲ τῷ αὐτοῦ τοῦ νοῦ οἶον κύματι καὶ ὑψοῦ ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ οἶον οἰδήσαντος ἀρθεὶς εἰσεῖδεν ἐξαίφνης οὐκ ἰδὼν ὅπως, ἀλλ’ ἢ θέα πλήσασα φωτὸς τὰ ὄμματα οὐ δι’ αὐτοῦ πεποίηκεν ἄλλο ὄραν, ἀλλ’ αὐτὸ τὸ φῶς τὸ ὄραμα ἦν.

It is there that one lets all study go; up to a point one has been led along and settled firmly in beauty and as far as this one thinks that in which one is, but is carried out of it by the surge of the wave of Intellect itself and lifted on high by a kind of swell and sees **suddenly**, not seeing how, but the vision fills his eyes with light and does not make him see something else by it, but the light himself [i.e. the Good-One] is what he sees.¹⁵¹

Nonetheless, claiming that, when he alludes to the coming of the One, Plotinus remembers his reading of *Symposium* and *Seventh Letter*, does not mean that the depth of his comprehension of ἐξαίφνης is fully clarified. For instance, it is very easy to link together the ‘mystical’ aspect of the ‘suddenness’ of the manifestation of the One and the fact that in *Parm*, 156c-d Plato had described the ‘sudden’ as ἄτοπον, viz. as ‘mysterious’.

In regard of Plotinus’ kinetics, there is also a great temptation to look in his theory of motion for a treatment on the ‘sudden’, notably in expecting to discover a link between the ‘sudden’ and the dynamic kernel of Plotinus’ theory¹⁵². However, such a temptation remains unfortunately unsatisfied, because Plotinus never mentions the ἐξαίφνης in his reasoning on kinematics and dynamics. Despite this state of affairs, insofar as Plotinus sowed the future Neoplatonist approach by distinguishing two kinds of motion – the

¹⁴⁹ English translation: A. H. ARMSTRONG (ed.), *Plotinus in Seven Volumes*, Harvard University Press, vol. 5, 1984, p. 179

¹⁵⁰ English translation: A. H. ARMSTRONG (ed.), *Plotinus in Seven Volumes*, Harvard University Press, vol. 7, 1988, p. 191-193

¹⁵¹ English translation: A. H. ARMSTRONG (ed.), *Plotinus in Seven Volumes*, Harvard University Press, vol. 7, 1988, p. 201

¹⁵² It is interesting to note that the current best specialist of Plotinus had formerly promised a specific study on the ἐξαίφνης and Plotinus’ kinetics, but has never published it: R. CHIARADONNA, *Sostanza movimento analogia. Plotino critico di Aristotele*, Bibliopolis, 2002, p. 187 n. 60

causative process and the sensible trajectory –, I shall give a brief account of his kinetics which had been masterly analysed by Chiaradonna¹⁵³.

Plotinus illustrates wonderfully the genuine aspects of Plato's kinetics presented above, notably the fact that Platonic dynamics is primarily vertical and depends on a multi-layered ontology¹⁵⁴. Indeed, to reply to Alexander's Neo-Aristotelian physics¹⁵⁵ and to the exegetic tendencies of his pupil Porphyry, Plotinus supports psychic self-motion by considering – in VI 1 [42], 16 – each kinetic process must be explained by means of two kinds of motion¹⁵⁶: firstly, the recursive causative motion of the process, secondly the extensive process itself. In his view, motion in itself should be strongly distinguished from the extended process or trajectory accomplished by the sensible moving object. Indeed, the causative motion is a complete ἐνέργεια outside space¹⁵⁷ and time¹⁵⁸, contrary to the second which is incomplete, derived and quantitative. Thus, there is the *vertical* causation of the process and the *horizontal* process itself, in such a way that dynamics studies the first and kinematics the second. So, Plotinus' kinetics exemplifies perfectly the characteristics of an orthodox Platonism by separating dynamics' and kinematics' realms.

In the very anti-Aristotelian VI 1-3 [42-44] which are an indirect and elenctic proof of Platonism¹⁵⁹, Plotinus strategically did not explicitly clarify the metaphysical status of the causative motion, but in other treatises¹⁶⁰, following Plato, he asserts that is extra-physical and psychic, namely the soul is essentially dynamical and principle of sensible and

¹⁵³ R. CHIARADONNA, *Sostanza movimento analogia. Plotino critico di Aristotele*, Bibliopolis, 2002, p. 167-225, "Energeia et kinesis chez Plotin et Aristote (Enn. VI 1, [42], 16, 4-19)", in M. CRUBELLIER, A. JAULIN, D. LEFEBVRE, P.-M. MOREL (eds.), *Dunamis. Autour de la puissance chez Aristote*, Peeters, 2008, p. 471-491; "The categories and the status of the physical world: Plotinus and the Neo-platonic commentators", in P. ADAMSON, H. BALTUSSEN, M. W. F. STONE (eds.), *Philosophy, Science and Exegesis in Greek, Arabic and Latin Commentaries*, Institute of Classical Studies, School of Advanced Study, 2004, p. 126-130 and "Movimento dell'intelletto e movimento dell'anima in Plotino (Enn. VI 2 [43], 8.10)", in F. ALESSE, F. ARONADIO, C. DALFINO, L. SIMEONI, E. SPINELLI (eds.), *Anthropine sophia. Studi di filologia e storiografia filosofica in memoria di Gabriele Giannantoni*, Bibliopolis, 2008, p. 497-508

¹⁵⁴ M. F. WAGNER, "Vertical Causation in Plotinus", in R. BAINE HARRIS (ed.), *The Structure of Being. A Neoplatonic Approach*, State University of New York Press, 1982, p. 51-72

¹⁵⁵ ALEXANDER OF APHRODISIAS, *In Phys.*, scholium 435, in M. RASHED (ed.), *Alexandre d'Aphrodise, Commentaire perdu à la Physique d'Aristote (livres IV-VIII). Les scholies byzantines*, de Gruyter, 2011, p. 428-429 (see also: N. RESCHER, M. E. MARMURA (eds.), *The Refutation by Alexander of Aphrodisias of Galen's Treatise on the Theory of Motion*, Islamabad, 1965, p. 15-16; p. 74-75)

¹⁵⁶ R. CHIARADONNA, "Energeia et kinesis chez Plotin et Aristote (Enn. VI 1, [42], 16, 4-19)", in M. CRUBELLIER, A. JAULIN, D. LEFEBVRE, P.-M. MOREL (eds.), *Dunamis. Autour de la puissance chez Aristote*, Peeters, 2008, p. 471-491; "The categories and the status of the physical world: Plotinus and the Neo-platonic commentators", in P. ADAMSON, H. BALTUSSEN, M. W. F. STONE (eds.), *Philosophy, Science and Exegesis in Greek, Arabic and Latin Commentaries*, Institute of Classical Studies, School of Advanced Study, London, 2004, p. 126-130

¹⁵⁷ PLOTINUS, *Enneads*, V 2 [11], 2.10-24

¹⁵⁸ PLOTINUS, *Enneads*, VI 5 [23], 11, IV 4 [28], 15-17 (on the complex relation between soul, time and motion: IV 4 [28], 15-17, III 7 [45], 8-10, 11.59-62, 12.15-22, 13.30-69. See: F. KARFIK, "Le temps et l'âme chez Plotin. A propos des *Ennéades* VI 5 [23], 11; IV 4 [28] 15-16; III 7 [45] 11", in *Elenchos*, 23, fasc. 2, 2012, p. 227-257)

¹⁵⁹ R. CHIARADONNA, "The categories and the status of the physical world: Plotinus and the Neo-platonic commentators", in P. ADAMSON, H. BALTUSSEN, M. W. F. STONE (eds.), *Philosophy, Science and Exegesis in Greek, Arabic and Latin Commentaries*, Institute of Classical Studies, School of Advanced Study, London, 2004, p. 129

¹⁶⁰ PLOTINUS, *Enneads*, III 6 [26], 4

quantitative process. Moreover, it is interesting to note that, as Plato said in the *Laws*¹⁶¹, for Plotinus the soul, without being local, is accountable of circularity in extended motion, while the body moves naturally in a rectilinear way¹⁶². In brief, as other phenomena¹⁶³, corporeal motions are explained via the reference to their extra-physical and intelligible causes, namely dynamical soul. To be truly exhaustive, beyond psychic self-motion, there is also the Great Genera or Idea of Motion in the Intellect¹⁶⁴. So, Plotinus' triadic theory of motion can be schematized as follows¹⁶⁵:

Intelligible	Intellect: Idea of Motion ¹⁶⁶	
	Soul: psychic self-motion ¹⁶⁷	(dynamics)
Sensible	Body: quantitative motion ¹⁶⁸	(kinematics)

Later, I shall focus on the influence of Plotinus' kinetics in Neoplatonism, notably for Damascius who has imposed a twist to Platonic 'sudden' from kinematics to dynamics. Coming back to Plotinus' understanding of ἐξαίφνης, I wish concisely return to Chiaradonna's suggestion according to which the 'sudden' of *Parm.* 156c-d is, in an amphibious way, present in Plotinus' conception of the causative psychic self-motion¹⁶⁹. Indeed, I actually think Chiaradonna's intuition was historically followed by Damascius.

Plotinus would have interpreted the psychic dynamical causation in connection with the ἐξαίφνης for the following reasons: firstly, the soul (at least partially¹⁷⁰) as well as the 'sudden' is apart from time; and secondly, Plato had appealed to ἐξαίφνης for explaining change as well as the causation of the soul is employed as an explanation of the sensible motion by Plotinus. So, Plotinus would have conceived that Plato had said that the 'sudden' is 'apart from time' in the sense according to which that is a non-temporal entity *outside* of time or *beyond* the time. This characterization of ἐξαίφνης as timeless is obviously in total agreement with the mystic suddenness of the coming of the One.

The meeting between the soul and the One on the occasion of the psychic ascent occurs outside of time¹⁷¹, in the same way that, for Apuleius, wisdom corresponds to a timeless (*intemporalis*) connection of the soul with the everlasting Intelligible realm¹⁷². In the 'sudden', by virtue of such a union (which, strictly speaking, is a *unification*), the soul takes part in the super-eternity of the highest principle, while the soul partakes in time in

¹⁶¹ PLATO, *Laws*, X 893b-899b

¹⁶² PLOTINUS, *Enneads*, II 2 [14], 1.2-19, 39-51, 2.5-27 (see: M. RASHED, "Contre le mouvement rectiligne naturel: trois adversaires (Xénarque, Ptolémée, Plotin) pour une thèse", in R. CHIARADONNA, F. TRABATTONI (eds.), *Physics and Philosophy of Nature in Greek Neoplatonism*, Brill, 2009, p. 34-41)

¹⁶³ D. J. O'MEARA, "Plotinus on How Soul Acts on Body", in D. J. O'MEARA (ed.), *Platonic Investigations*, Catholic University of America Press, 1985, p. 247-262

¹⁶⁴ PLOTINUS, *Enneads*, VI 2 [43], 7-8 (see: R. CHIARADONNA, "Movimento dell'intelletto e movimento dell'anima in Plotino (*Enn.* VI 2 [43], 8.10)", in F. ALESSE, F. ARONADIO, C. DALFINO, L. SIMEONI, E. SPINELLI (eds.), *Anthropine sophia. Studi di filologia e storiografia filosofica in memoria di Gabriele Giannantoni*, Bibliopolis, 2008, p. 497-508)

¹⁶⁵ Explicitly mentioned in: PLOTINUS, *Enneads*, VI 3 [44], 22.16-18

¹⁶⁶ PLOTINUS, *Enneads*, VI 2 [43], 7-8

¹⁶⁷ PLOTINUS, *Enneads*, VI 1 [42], 16, 3 [44], 22-23 and 3 [44], 27.23-25

¹⁶⁸ PLOTINUS, *Enneads*, VI 3 [44], 21-27

¹⁶⁹ R. CHIARADONNA, *Sostanza movimento analogia. Plotino critico di Aristotele*, Bibliopolis, 2002, p. 187 n. 60

¹⁷⁰ PLOTINUS, *Enneads*, III 7 [45], 7.1-7

¹⁷¹ PLOTINUS, *Enneads*, VI 7 [38], 31-35

¹⁷² APULEIUS, *De Platone et eius Dogmate*, II 20.248

the course of the psychic fall toward the sensible world and its embodiment¹⁷³. These mystical experiences (according to Porphyry, Plotinus had lived at least four ‘unifications’¹⁷⁴) happen in the life of the soul as *sandwiching* a timeless activity between – even, by virtue of the intermediary psychic nature according to which the soul is partaken between an intellectual part and a sensible one¹⁷⁵: *inside* – temporal ones¹⁷⁶, in the same way that in *Parm.*, 156c-d, the ἐξαίφνης occurs between two periods or stretches of time.

So, albeit Plotinus position seems to be closest to Apuleius than Taurus, the possibility might remain, according to Chiaradonna’s suggestion, that Plotinus’ insistence on the ἐξαίφνης of *Symposium* was in fact linked to an unorthodox reading of the kinematic excursus of *Parmenides*, in the way of a transfer of the ‘sudden’ from kinematics to dynamics which was later explicitly followed by Damascius. However, the fact is that Plotinus keeps the ἐξαίφνης for describing the connection with the One; furthermore, none of his texts can really put us in mind that he had elsewhere employed this word for another specific and *dynamic* entity, notably for the soul¹⁷⁷. Thus, I think, in view of the available texts, the mystical understanding of Plotinus’ ἐξαίφνης should be favoured rather than the dynamical one.

2.2.3. Iamblichus: between Kinematics and Mysticism

Iamblichus draws a reading quite different of the ‘mystical’ ἐξαίφνης. Besides, the word rarely appears in Iamblichus: in the chapter of *Protrepticus* in which Iamblichus copies the Platonic Allegory of the Cave almost word for word¹⁷⁸, in few passages of *De mysteriis*, in one of *De Anima*, and in none of the preserved fragments of his commentaries on Plato¹⁷⁹.

De mysteriis, I 7 21.1-5: Τὸ μὲν ἔστιν ἄκρον καὶ ὑπερέχον καὶ ὀλοτελές, τὸ δὲ τελευταῖον καὶ ἀπολειπόμενον καὶ ἀτελέστερον· καὶ τὸ μὲν πάντα δύναται ἅμα ἐν τῷ νῦν μονοειδῶς, τὸ δὲ οὔτε ὅλα οὔτε ἀθρόως οὔτε ἐξαίφνης οὔτε ἀμερίστως.

The one (of these extremes) [i.e. the genus of the Gods] is at the summit, and transcendent and perfect, while the other [i.e. the genus of the Souls] is at the bottom, deficient, and relatively imperfect; the one can achieve all things in the **present instant** and unitarily, while the other can achieve neither all things nor all at once nor **suddenly** nor indivisibly.¹⁸¹

De mysteriis, III 13 130.8-14: ὥσπερ γὰρ ἡλίου καταλάμπαντος οὐ πέφυκε τὴν αὐγὴν

For just as when the sun shines, the darkness by its nature is not able to resist its light, and

¹⁷³ PLOTINUS, *Enneads*, III 7 [45], 11-13

¹⁷⁴ PORPHYRY, *Life of Plotinus*, 23

¹⁷⁵ PLOTINUS, *Enneads*, II 9 [33], 2, 4-10, IV 1 [21], 1.12-13, IV 3 [27], 30, IV 8 [6], 4, 25-35, 7-8. That point is highly debated amongst the Platonists. For instance, Plotinus’ option had been forcefully criticized by Iamblichus. See: C. STEEL, *The Changing Self. A Study on the Soul in Later Neoplatonism: Iamblichus, Damascius and Priscianus*, Brussel, 1978, p. 34-51 and G. SHAW, *Theurgy and the Soul. The Neoplatonism of Iamblichus*, The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995, p. 61-69. See also: PROCLUS, *Elements of Theology*, §211, *In Tim.*, III 333.28-334.28, *In Parm.*, IV 948.12-30 and R. CHLUP, *Proclus. An Introduction*, Cambridge University Press, 2012, p. 26-27

¹⁷⁶ See: R. SORABJI, *Time, creation and the continuum*, Duckworth, 1983, p. 161-163

¹⁷⁷ PLOTINUS, *Enneads*, II 9 [33], 9.53, III 1 [3], 1.17, III 2 [47], 4.42, IV 6 [41], 3.37, V 8 [31], 7.14. In all these texts, ἐξαίφνης means ‘suddenly’ in the sense of a *kinematic* durationless switch.

¹⁷⁸ IAMBlichus, *Protrepticus*, 15

¹⁷⁹ Collected in: J. M. DILLON (ed.), *Iamblichi Chalcidensis. In Platonis Dialogos Commentariorum Fragmenta*, Brill, 1973

¹⁸¹ English translation (modified): E. C. CLARK, J. M. DILLON, J. P. HERSHBELL (eds.), *Iamblichus. De mysteriis*, Society of Biblical Literature, 2003, p. 27

ὑπομένειν τὸ σκότος, ἐξαίφνης δὲ ἀφανὲς ἄρδην καθίσταται καὶ παντελῶς ἐκ μέσων ὑποχωρεῖ καὶ ἐκποδὸν ἐξίσταται, οὕτω καὶ τῆς πάντα ἀγαθῶν πληροῦσης τῶν θεῶν δυνάμεως πολλαχόθεν ἐπιλαμπούσης οὐκ ἔχει χώραν ἢ τῶν κακῶν ταραχὴ πνευμάτων, οὐδὲ δύναται που διαφαίνεσθαι, ἀλλ' ὥς τὸ μηδὲν ἢ ἐν τῷ μὴ ὄντι κεχώρισται, οὐδαμοῦ φύσιν ἔχουσα κινεῖσθαι τῶν κρειτόνων παρόντων ἢ παρενοχλεῖν αὐτοῖς δυναμένη ἡνίκα ἂν ἐπιλάμπωσιν.

De mysteriis, V 4 203.9-12: Ἦ που ἄρα τὰ τῶν θεῶν χραίνεται ἀπὸ τῶν τοιούτων ἀτμῶν, ἃ καὶ τῆς ὕλης ὅλης καὶ τῶν ἐνύλων σωμάτων τοῦς ἀτμούς, ἵν' οὕτως εἴπωμεν, ἐξαίφνης κατὰ μίαν βολὴν ἀποκόπτεται;

De Anima, frg. 36. 14-19¹⁸⁰: Εἰ δὲ ὡς δύναμις ὑποκειμένου, ὥσπερ δὴ ἁρμονία λύρας ἢ τελειότης, προαφίσταται τοῦ σώματος ἐν τῷ ἀποθνήσκειν ἢ ψυχῇ, προφθείρεται μὲν οὐδαμῶς (οὐδὲ γὰρ διὰ κινήσεως πρόεισιν εἰς τὸ μὴ εἶναι), ἀλλ' ἐξαίφνης εἰς τὸ μὴ εἶναι μεθίσταται ἀχράντως καὶ ἄνευ φθορᾶς, ὥσπερ δὴ καὶ ἔστιν ὅτε ἔστιν ἀθρόως οἶον ἀστραπῆς ἐκλαμπύσης.

suddenly becomes wholly invisible, withdraws completely from its midst, and altogether ceases, so when the power of the gods, filling all with its benefits, shines forth in many directions, the tumult of evil spirits has no place, and cannot manifest itself in any way, but is set apart as nothing or non-being, in no way having a nature to move itself when superior beings are present, or able to cause them annoyance when they shine forth.¹⁸²

Is it likely, then, that the substance of the gods should suffer any pollution from such vapours, seeing as it **suddenly** and at one blow, so to speak, cuts off the vapours emanating from matter as a whole and from material bodies?¹⁸³

If, on the other hand, the soul is like a potentiality inhering in an object – as for instance the harmony of a lyre – or like the perfection of an object, and departs from the body in death, it by no means is corrupted before the body (for it does not proceed to non-being through motion), but **suddenly** changes to non-being without time elapsing or the soul being corrupted, just as, when it exists, it exists instantaneously, like lightning flashing.¹⁸⁴

In three of these passages, Iamblichus makes a connection between the ‘suddenness’ of a change and the commonplace example of lightning flash as Ps.-Plato did in *Seventh Letter*, 341c, in such a way Iamblichus’ uses taste almost like mystical ones. Such a taste is obviously reinforced by the fact that ἐξαίφνης, at least in *De mysteriis*, appears in contexts in which Iamblichus speaks about Gods. So, as Plotinus, Iamblichus keeps the ἐξαίφνης for the higher levels of his theology (he never uses it for the intermediary genus of daemons and heroes), in such a way that, contrary to later Neoplatonists, he does not interlace a specific meaning of ἐξαίφνης with the soul-level.

However, such a ‘mystic’ overtone must be qualified by the fact that Iamblichus does not explain in detail his conception of ἐξαίφνης and uses it for instantaneous change understood as durationless switch in total agreement with *Parm*, 156c-d. Furthermore, in the quotation extracted from *De Anima* in which Iamblichus is focused on the event of *dying*, maybe, as I have suggested for Taurus, Iamblichus had in mind a passage of *Gorgias* in which Plato precisely discusses the ‘sudden’ separation of the soul from the body at the time of death¹⁸⁵. Anyway, as *De mysteriis*, I 7 21.1-5 shows, Iamblichus does not seem to really distinguish between Platonic ἐξαίφνης and Aristotelian νῦν when he has in mind a durationless event. Albeit Iamblichus’ conception of the νῦν, according to

¹⁸⁰ = STOBÆUS, *Anthology*, I 384.2-8

¹⁸² English translation: E. C. CLARK, J. M. DILLON, J. P. HERSHBELL (eds.), *Iamblichus. De mysteriis*, Society of Biblical Literature, 2003, p. 153

¹⁸³ English translation (modified): E. C. CLARK, J. M. DILLON, J. P. HERSHBELL (eds.), *Iamblichus. De mysteriis*, Society of Biblical Literature, 2003, p. 231

¹⁸⁴ English translation: J. F. FINAMORE, J. M. DILLON (eds.), *Iamblichus De Anima. Text, translation, and commentary*, Brill, 2002, p. 65

¹⁸⁵ PLATO, *Gorgias*, 523e2-6

Proclus' and Simplicius' testimonies of Iamblichus' *In Timaeum*¹⁸⁶, had been quite complex and very elaborated¹⁸⁷, none of the evidences has preserved a substantial analysis either of the precise kinematic properties of the ἐξαίφνης/νῦν, or of its logical status.

In conclusion, due to the status of our sources, that seems difficult to understand well Iamblichus' reading of Plato's ἐξαίφνης. In view of his strong tendency to mysticism, the father of theurgy would likely have insisted on Diotima's speech rather than on the kinematic excursus of *Parmenides*. But in the absence of any evidence concerning his reading of these two passages (notably in the lost commentary on *Parmenides*), all interpretations of Iamblichus' position remain highly and desperately conjectural.

Nevertheless, there stays few clear-cut points: from Middle-Platonism to Early Neoplatonism, the ἐξαίφνης had always been understood as belonging – more or less explicitly – to kinematics, and never expressly to dynamics on the one hand, and during that period Platonists seem to have particularly emphasized its 'mystical' overtone on the other.

3. LATER NEOPLATONISM: THE TRANSFER OF THE ἑΞΑΙΦΝΗΣ FROM KINEMATICS TO DYNAMICS

If the Platonist readings presented above, I apologize, are far from being very enthralling, especially by comparison with the original Platonic text, the situation is fortunately quite different for the following. Indeed, by virtue of the *Parmenides*-focusing of Later Neoplatonism, the interpretation of ἐξαίφνης becomes a significant issue for discovering the 'true' understanding of Plato's thought, notably concerning the very nature of the soul.

3.1. The σκοπός of the Third Hypothesis of *Parmenides*

In several texts, Proclus draws an overview of the various readings of the Hypotheses of *Parmenides*, from Middle-Platonism to him¹⁸⁸. These important testimonies, supported by their scholia¹⁸⁹, show that there was a large consensus on the σκοπός of the Third Hypothesis from Plotinus to Damascius, by way of Amelius, Porphyry, Plutarch, Syrianus

¹⁸⁶ PROCLUS, *In Tim*, III 30.30-32.6, 33.1-30; SIMPLICIUS, *In Cat*, 351.32-352.20, 353.19-356.7, 355.27-356.1, *In Phys*, 786.11-788.33, 792.20-795.3 (available in: S. SAMBURSKY, S. PINES (eds.), *The Concept of Time in Late Neoplatonism. Texts with Translation, Introduction and Notes*, Jerusalem, 1971, p. 26-47)

¹⁸⁷ Ph. HOFFMANN, "Jamblique exégète du pythagoricien Archytas: trois originalités d'une doctrine du temps", in *Les Etudes philosophiques*, 3, 1980, p. 320-323 and R. SORABJI, *Time, creation and the continuum*, Duckworth, 1983, p. 33-45

¹⁸⁸ PROCLUS, *Platonic Theology* I 7-12, *In Parm*, I 630.37-643.5, VI 1051.34-1064.12. On the last text, see: H. D. SAFFREY, L. G. WESTERINK (eds.), *Proclus. Théologie Platonicienne*, vol. 1, Les Belles Lettres, 1968, p. lxxv-lxxxix; C. STEEL, "Une histoire de l'interprétation du *Parménide* dans l'Antiquité", in M. BARBANTI, F. ROMANO (eds.), *Il Parmenide di Platone et la sua tradizione*, Catania, 2002, p. 11-40 and C. LUNA, A.-Ph. SEGONDS (eds.), *Proclus. Commentaire sur le Parménide de Platon*, vol. 6, Les Belles Lettres, 2017, p. xvi-xxiv

¹⁸⁹ scholia of the manuscripts *Ambrosianus* A167 sup., fol. 157r; *Parisianus graecus* 1810, fol. 178v, 179r and *Laurentianus* *Plut.* 85.8, fol. 188v, 189v, 190r, 191r, 192r (available in: C. LUNA, A.-Ph. SEGONDS (eds.), *Proclus. Commentaire sur le Parménide de Platon*, vol. 6, Les Belles Lettres, 2017, p. 147-150). By the way, some of those assignations are confirmed by SIMPLICIUS, *In Phys*, 230.4-231.6 and DAMASCIUS, *In Parm*, 247.15-16, 256.20-21, 286.19-23, 292.7-9 (= L. G. WESTERINK, J. COMBÈS (eds.), *Damascius. Commentaire du Parménide de Platon*, Les Belles Lettres (abbreviated by W&C in the next footnotes), vol. 4, 2003, p. 3.15-17, 19.14-16, 74.8-12, 84.5-9). On the manuscripts and the textual tradition of *In Parm*, see: C. LUNA, A.-Ph. SEGONDS (eds.), *Proclus. Commentaire sur le Parménide de Platon*, vol. 1, Les Belles Lettres, 2007, p. cxv-cdlxviii

and Proclus. Indeed, all agreed that in this Hypothesis, Plato had aimed at catching the intermediary nature of the soul¹⁹⁰. The only black sheep appears to be Iamblichus who thought that the σκοπός concerns the essence of the intermediary genus of a theological bestiary (heavily inspired by the *Chaldaic Oracles*), namely the nature of angels, daemons and heroes, while Plato would have treated with the soul in the Fourth and Fifth Hypotheses¹⁹¹. Iamblichus' position had been harshly rejected by his successors Proclus¹⁹² and Damascius¹⁹³ in their commentaries, despite the usual claims about the 'greatness' of the father of theurgy. Thus, a Neoplatonist consensus seems to enclose together the soul-level and the brief passage on the 'sudden', in such a way that they must find a kind of connection between the very psychic nature and the ἐξαίφνης.

Despite this exegetical claim, that is hard to discover a high interest for the 'sudden' in their respective thoughts, as if they were discomfited with the content of the Third Hypothesis. I think the very reason why Neoplatonists had considered this text as referring to the soul, before anything else, was purely exegetical, so, in a sense, purely *formal*, without any preliminary scouring of its precise *matter*. In other words, such an interpretation above all results from their *Parmenides*-focusing.

The Neoplatonic *Parmenides*-focusing is utterly obvious, even if the intertwining of the exegesis of the dialogue with the elaboration of a genuine Platonic theology is still partially obscure¹⁹⁴. By the way, Proclus claims in the *Platonic Theology* that the complete theological thought of Plato can especially be found in the *Parmenides* rather than in the other dialogues¹⁹⁵. Following this statement and the alleged concordance between the levels of Neoplatonic multi-layered theology and the Hypotheses, the Third Hypothesis must match with a diacosm. What is the best candidate?

The answer must be discovered in the exegetical tradition of the *Parmenides*. Beyond the Middle-Platonist dialectical interpretations of the *Parmenides*¹⁹⁶, the Third Hypothesis had been typically commented as an arcane key of the soul's realm from the Neopythagoreanism of Moderatus¹⁹⁷, and through him from his reader Plotinus¹⁹⁸. The deep influence of Plotinus upon his successors had quickly transformed the brief allusions

¹⁹⁰ See: C. STEEL, *The Changing Self. A Study on the Soul in Later Neoplatonism: Iamblichus, Damascius and Priscianus*, Brussel, 1978, p. 80-87

¹⁹¹ PROCLUS, *In Parm*, VI 1054.37-1055.25 (Proclus' evidence is sustained by DAMASCIUS, *In Parm*, 247.15-16, 256.20-21, 286.19-23, 292.7-9 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 3.15-17, 19.14-16, 74.8-12, 84.5-9). On Iamblichus' interpretation: J. F. FINAMORE, "Iamblichus's Interpretation of the *Parmenides*' Third Hypothesis", in J. D. TURNER, K. CORRIGAN (eds.), *Plato's Parmenides and its heritage, vol. 2: Its Reception in Neoplatonic, Jewish and Christian Texts*, Society of Biblical Literature, 2010, p. 119-132

¹⁹² PROCLUS, *In Parm*, VI 1055.17-1057.5

¹⁹³ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm*, 247 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 4.1-19)

¹⁹⁴ C. STEEL, "Le Parménide est-il le fondement de la Théologie Platonicienne?", in A.-Ph. SEGONDS, C. STEEL (eds.), *Proclus et la Théologie Platonicienne. Actes du Colloque International de Louvain (13-16 mai 1998)*, Leuven University Press/Les Belles Lettres, 2000, p. 373-398

¹⁹⁵ PROCLUS, *Platonic Theology* I 7

¹⁹⁶ PROCLUS, *Platonic Theology* I 8-9, *In Parm*, I 630.37-635.27

¹⁹⁷ SIMPLICIUS, *In Phys*, 230.36-40. E. R. DODDS, "The *Parmenides* of Plato and the Origins of the Neoplatonic One", in *Classical Quarterly*, 22, 1928, p. 129-142 and J. M. RIST, "The Neoplatonic One and Plato's *Parmenides*", in *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, 93, 1962, p. 389-401. For a qualification of the Moderatus' origin, see: C. STEEL, "Une histoire de l'interprétation du Parménide dans l'Antiquité", in M. BARBANTI, F. ROMANO (eds.), *Il Parmenide di Platone et la sua tradizione*, Catania, 2002, p. 17-22

¹⁹⁸ PORPHYRY, *Life of Plotinus*, 20

of the schedule of the *Parmenides* present in the *Enneads*¹⁹⁹ into extended commentaries of the dialogue that systematize Plotinus' teaching. Thus, a consensus emerges from Plotinus according to which the σκοπός of the First Hypothesis is the One, of the Second is the Intellect, and of the Third is the Soul. Iamblichus will be the single to interpret the Third Hypothesis differently. All other commentators, from earlier Neoplatonists as Amelius and Porphyry to the later who succeed to the teaching of Plutarch of Athens, had followed Plotinus, sometimes, of course, with great amendments aiming to erect a very 'baroque'²⁰⁰ theology from the initial Plotinian bricks, notably by distinguishing several diacosms inside the three hypostases (intelligible, intelligible-intellective, intellective in the original homogeneous Intelligible realm). Thus, that is the respect for the tradition, and especially for Plotinus, which is primarily accountable for the conflation between the soul and the ἐξαίφνης – in other words, a purely *formal* reason.

The 'formalism' of the concordance between the Hypotheses and the diacosms is vivid in a very funny fact: albeit all Plotinus' successors were in agreement both with the conflation of the soul-level and the Third Hypothesis and with the Plotinian schedule of the *Parmenides*, they had split the dialogue in different ways, in such a way that the Third Hypothesis is not the same text for all²⁰¹. Consequently, for some Neoplatonists, the passage on the 'sudden' belongs to the Second Hypothesis rather than to the Third. According to Proclus, Amelius had divided the dialogue into eight Hypotheses²⁰², while Porphyry and the majority of Plotinus' heirs (Iamblichus, Plutarch of Athens, Syrianus, Proclus, and Damascius) into nine²⁰³, the 'Anonymous of Rhodes' into ten²⁰⁴. Therefore, for Amelius the Third Hypothesis likely corresponds to 157b6-159b1²⁰⁵, for Porphyry and his followers to 155e4-157b5. Proclus judges the more consensual division into nine hypotheses as certainly more natural than the others, but given that the passage on the 'sudden' is likely a corollary or an appendix of the Second Hypothesis²⁰⁶, the true number is rather eight according to Amelius. Anyway, the various cuttings of Plotinus' pupils show us that Plotinus had surely neither elaborated a precise exegesis of the Hypotheses, nor got closer together the essence of the soul and the 'sudden' (indeed, Plotinus seems to have rather kept the 'sudden' for the coming of the One). Consequently, directly after his teaching and in the absence of clear indications, his pupils Amelius and Porphyry had

¹⁹⁹ PLOTINUS, *Enneads*, IV 2 [4], 2.52-55, V 1 [10], 8.1-27. For a reconstruction of Plotinus' exegesis, see: H. D. SAFFREY, L. G. WESTERINK (eds.), *Proclus. Théologie Platonicienne*, vol. 1, Les Belles Lettres, 1968, p. lxxv-lxxix and K. CORRIGAN, "Plotinus and the Hypotheses of the Second Part of Plato's *Parmenides*", in J. D. TURNER, K. CORRIGAN (eds.), *Plato's Parmenides and its heritage, vol. 2: Its Reception in Neoplatonic, Jewish and Christian Texts*, Society of Biblical Literature, 2010, p. 35-48

²⁰⁰ R. WARDY, *Doing Greek Philosophy*, Routledge, 2007, p. 81

²⁰¹ See: C. LUNA, A.-Ph. SEGONDS (eds.), *Proclus. Commentaire sur le Parménide de Platon*, vol. 6, Les Belles Lettres, 2017, p. 1 n.5 (p. 164-168)

²⁰² PROCLUS, *In Parm*, VI 1052.31-1053.35

²⁰³ PROCLUS, *In Parm*, VI 1053.36-1055.25, 1058.21-1064.12

²⁰⁴ PROCLUS, *In Parm*, VI 1057.5-1064.12

²⁰⁵ Corrigan considers that Amelius had neglected the last hypothesis (165e2-166c5) rather than regarded 155e4-157b5 as a part of the Second Hypothesis, see: K. CORRIGAN, "Plotinus and the Hypotheses of the Second Part of Plato's *Parmenides*", in J. D. TURNER, K. CORRIGAN (eds.), *Plato's Parmenides and its heritage, vol. 2: Its Reception in Neoplatonic, Jewish and Christian Texts*, Society of Biblical Literature, 2010, p. 39-40

²⁰⁶ F. M. CORNFORD, *Plato and Parmenides*, Kegan Paul, 1939, p. 194, p. 202; F. NIEWOEHNER, *Dialog und Dialektik in Platons 'Parmenides'*, Meisenheim, 1971, p. 280; S. SCOLNICOV (ed.), *Plato's Parmenides*, University of California Press, 2003, p. 134 and M. DIXSAUT, "Le temps qui s'avance et l'instant du changement (*Timée*, 37c-39e, *Parménide*, 140e-141e, 151e-155E)", in *Revue Philosophique de Louvain*, 101, 2003-2, p. 260

challenged in different ways the text about the ἐξαίφνης. But Amelius was unlucky, since his (possible) best heir – Iamblichus – had rejected his interpretation by favouring the division into nine sections. Yet, given that the σκοποί of the next two hypotheses, for Amelius and Iamblichus, are the same (namely the superior/rational and the inferior/irrational souls), Iamblichus had probably kept from Amelius that the σκοπός of 155e4-157b5 is not the soul but the last divine genus – namely angels, daemons and heroes – before the rational soul possessed by men, in such a way his innovation had consisted to split the Second Hypothesis of Amelius into two separated hypotheses.

In conclusion, at least from Porphyry, commenting on the Third Hypothesis was become equivalent to challenging with the ‘sudden’, in such a way that the commentators should discover a psychic dimension for the ‘sudden’. Unfortunately, only Damascius’ commentary on the Third Hypothesis has lasted the centuries to us, in such a way that the fashion by which Porphyry or Proclus had proceeded for integrating the ἐξαίφνης into the study of the soul remains highly conjectural, especially as the ‘sudden’ is far from being very present in their other writings.

However, I wish to suggest a possible puzzle that would force the Neoplatonists to elaborate a non-usual understanding of the ἐξαίφνης. By virtue of their belief of an ideal harmony between Aristotle and Plato²⁰⁷, they did not hesitate to have kinematics very strongly influenced by Aristotle’s (sometimes *too* influenced for some Neoplatonists themselves²⁰⁸). Yet, interpreting the ἐξαίφνης *kinematically* as an Aristotelian νῦν or not doing that implies to mangle either the concordance between the Hypotheses and the diacosms, or the harmonization of Aristotle with Plato. Indeed, understanding the ἐξαίφνης as kinematic actually involves an invasion of Platonic doctrines in a sensible realm usually governed by Aristotelian laws (and, conversely, an intrusion of Aristotelian physics into a theological Platonic framework), so the cost will be at least a kind of confusion between the two philosophers’ jurisdictions, and – more intolerable – will highlight an evident *tension* between Aristotle’s and Plato’s teachings: Aristotle’s νῦν is merely physical, whereas Plato’s ἐξαίφνης should be, for exegetical reasons, psychic. So, the Neoplatonists have two options: either rejecting the conflation between the νῦν and the ἐξαίφνης for preserving the Plotinian schedule of the Hypotheses by supporting that the ἐξαίφνης is a psychic stuff, if so they miss an opportunity to harmonize Aristotle’s and Plato’s physics; or, as Simplicius did²⁰⁹, preferring such harmonization by supporting that the νῦν and the ἐξαίφνης are the same item, if so that becomes very hard to interpret the Third Hypothesis as speaking about the Soul. The conjunction between their ideal of harmonization and their respect for the Plotinian exegesis entails a kind of Cornelian choice. So, perhaps, at least in the context of a commentary on the *Parmenides*, it becomes crucial to elaborate a clear distinction between the Aristotelian νῦν and the Platonic ἐξαίφνης to preserve the concordance between the Hypotheses and the hypostases. I shall argue that Damascius was perfectly aware of this dilemma and had chosen to strongly distinguish between a *kinematic* νῦν (that is true, not really in an Aristotelian fashion) and a *dynamic* ἐξαίφνης. Notwithstanding, the case of Proclus appears as being quite different.

²⁰⁷ On this Neoplatonic ideal of a deep harmony between Plato and Aristotle, see: I. HADOT, *Athenian and Alexandrian Neoplatonism and the Harmonization of Aristotle and Plato*, Brill, 2015

²⁰⁸ For instance, Simplicius found Proclus’ theory of motion too Aristotelian: SIMPLICIUS, *In Phys*, 404.16-33

²⁰⁹ SIMPLICIUS, *In Phys*, 982.6

3.2. The ἐξαίφνης as constituting the Essence of the Soul

3.2.1. Proclus' Ambiguity

Given the loss of Proclus' commentary on the Third Hypothesis, Proclus' understanding of the 'sudden' should be discovered in his other works. The least that can be said is that Proclus was not very interested by the ἐξαίφνης, since he had used this word only seven times in his very vast oeuvre²¹⁰. Such parsimony is rather surprising for Proclus. Fortunately, one of these occurrences is explicitly linked to the Third Hypothesis, and several of them are employed in a context in which Proclus had in mind either the journey of the soul, or the coming of Daemons or of the Forms, in such a way that they constitute a coherent and homogeneous corpus.

In Alc, 80.9-13: καὶ κατ' αὐτὴν τοῦ δαίμονος τὴν ἐνέργειαν οὐ τῇ διανοίᾳ μόνον οὐδὲ ταῖς δοξαστικαῖς δυνάμεσιν ὑπεδέχεται τὸ ἐκείθεν προῖον φῶς, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῷ πνεύματι, διὰ πάσης αὐτοῦ τῆς ζωῆς χωρούσης **ἐξαίφνης** τῆς δαιμονίας ἐλλάμψεως καὶ αὐτὴν ἤδη τὴν αἴσθησιν κινούσης.

as regards the actual operation of the daemon he received the light proceeding therefrom not merely in the discursive reason or the powers of conjecture, but also in the vehicle of the soul, the daemon-like irradiation passing **suddenly** through all the levels of his life and even arousing sense-perception.²¹²

In Tim, I 112.25-113.7: οἶδα μὲν οὖν, ὅτι καὶ Πλούταρχος ὁ Χαίρωνεὺς ἱστορεῖ τῶν περὶ τὴν Βρεττανίαν νησίδων κατὰ τινα μίαν ἱερὰν εἶναι δοκοῦσαν καὶ ἄσυλον καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἀφειμένην ὑπὸ τῶν κρατούντων πολλάκις γίνεσθαι τοῦ ἀέρος συγχύσεις **ἐξαίφνης** καὶ καταπτώσεις ἢ ὄμβρων ἢ κεραυνῶν καὶ λέγειν τοὺς ἐγχωρίους, ὅτι τῶν κρείττωνων τις ἐξέλειπε, συνήθεις ὄντας τοῖς πάθεσι τούτοις, ὀνομάζειν δὲ κρείττονας ψυχὰς μετενσωματουμένας καὶ ἀπολιμπανούσας τινὰ γένεσιν. οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ καὶ κατιουσὼν εἰς σώματα ψυχῶν τοιαῦτα συμπίπτειν οὐκ ἀπογνωστέον, καὶ μάλιστα ἐπὶ τῶν μεγαλουργῶν καὶ δαιμονιωτέραν οὐσίαν λαχουσῶν, οἷαν καὶ τὴν τοῦ Φαέθοντος εἶναι ψυχὴν ὁ μῦθος οὗτος ἠνίξατο.

I know that Plutarch of Chaeronea tells the story²¹³ that, on one of the little islands around Britain – one that is reputed to be holy and inviolate, and has for this reason been left alone by those in power – there often **suddenly** occur disturbances of the air and the unleashing of either downpours or thunderbolts. Further he says the inhabitants who are used to such happenings say that one of the superior powers has passed on, meaning by 'superior ones' souls that are experiencing a change of bodies and are leaving one life-form. All the same one should not dismiss the idea that such things also occur when souls descend into bodies, especially in the case of those who are workers of greatness and have received a daemonic lot, such as this myth riddlingly suggests was the case with Phaethon's soul.²¹⁴

In Parm, IV 844.2-11: διὸ καὶ τὸ γινόμενον αἰεὶ γίνεται παρ' αὐτῆς· ὁμοῦ γὰρ τῷ ποιοῦντι πανταχοῦ τὸ γινόμενον· ὅθεν καὶ ἐν τοῖς κατὰ χρόνον ὑφισταμένοις ἐν τῷ **ἐξαίφνης** παραγίνεται τὸ εἶδος τῶν πρὸ τῆς παρουσίας αὐτοῦ ποιήσεων τὰ ἐμπόδια μόνον τῆς παρουσίας ἐξαίφνης· καὶ γὰρ ἢ μὲν ἐξαίρεσις <τῶν ἐμποδίων κατὰ χρόνον

For this reason the thing that comes to be always comes to be from thought, for the being being made is everywhere together with its maker. Hence even in things that come to be in time the Form appears **suddenly**, the creative actions preceding its appearance serving only to remove the obstacles to its appearance. For the removal of obstacles <takes time, but the

²¹⁰ PROCLUS, *In Alc*, 80.12, *In Remp*, II 353.2, 27, *In Parm*, IV 844.6, *In Crat*, 54.19, *In Tim*, I 112.30, *In Eucl*, 20.9

²¹² English translation: W. O'NEIL (ed.), *Proclus. Alcibiades I. A Translation and Commentary*, Springer, 1971, p. 53

²¹³ PLUTARCH, *De defectu oraculorum*, 419e-f

²¹⁴ English translation: H. TARRANT (ed.), *Proclus. Commentary on Plato's Timaeus, vol. I: Book I. Proclus on the Socratic State and Atlantis*, Cambridge University Press, 2006, p. 208

γίνεται, ἡ δὲ παρουσία τοῦ εἶδους> **κατὰ τὸ νῦν**, μιμουμένη τὴν ἀθρόαν καὶ αἰώνιον τῶν πάντων γένεσιν διὰ τὴν ἐπιτηδειότητα τῆς ὑποδοχῆς.

In Remp, II 352.23-353.7: εἰ δὲ ἄλλην ἄλλη καὶ **ἐξαπίνης**²¹¹ ὁρμᾶν φησιν, δῆλον δὴ πούθεν ὡς διασπείρονται μὲν εἰς τὴν πεπληθυσμένην καὶ διηρημένην ἐν τῇ γενέσει ζῶν καὶ εἰς οἰκῆσεις διαφερούσας καὶ μερίδας τῆς γῆς, ἀθρόως δὲ εἰσκρίνονται πᾶσαι καὶ ἀχρόνως τὰ σώματα ἐμψυχοῦσιν καὶ ἐνοικίζονται ἐν αὐτοῖς· ὡς τῆς ἔξω τῶν σωμάτων ζωῆς καὶ τῆς ἐν σώμασιν τὸν διορισμὸν ἀνεπαίσθητον ὑπάρχειν. τοιαύτην γὰρ ἐν Παρμενίδῃ τοῦ **ἐξαίφνης** αὐτὸς ἡμῖν ἡρμήνευσεν φύσιν, ἄτοπον δὲ τινα οὔσαν ὡς ἐκεῖ λέγει, καθ' ἣν αἱ ἀπὸ τῶν ἀντικειμένων εἰς τὰ ἀντικείμενα γίνονται μεταστάσεις. καὶ εἰσκρίσεις οὖν αἱ εἰς τὰ σώματα τῶν ψυχῶν ἐν τούτῳ δὴ τῷ **ἐξαπίνης** ἐπιτελοῦνται, καὶ πᾶσα μεταβολὴ εἰς τε στάσιν ἐκ κινήσεως καὶ εἰς κίνησιν ἀπὸ τῆς στάσεως.

In Remp, II 353.26-354.2: Τὸ δ' οὖν ἐφεξῆς πάντων τούτων, ὅτι πῶς μὲν ἐν τῷ σώματι γέγονεν, οὐκ οἶδεν – ἡ γὰρ **ἐξαίφνης** ὁδὸς οὐκ ἔδωκεν ἐπιστάσει χώραν· οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐπὶ τῶν ἄλλων **ἐξαπίνης** γινομένων ἐρίσταμεν, χρόνου παράτασιν τῆς ἐπιστάσεως ἀπαιτούσης, ἵνα παρακολουθήσῃ τῇ ἀρχῇ καὶ τῷ μέσῳ καὶ τῷ τέλει τοῦ συμβαίνοντος –, ἀναβλέψας δὲ ἔωθεν ἑαυτὸν εἶδεν ἐπὶ τῇ πυρᾷ κείμενον δωδεκαταῖον, ὡς εἴρηται ἐν προοιμίῳ.

appearance of Form occurs> in an instant, imitating in this the eternal genesis of all things at once through the principle of aptitude for reception.²¹⁵

If [Plato] says that '<such soul> is rising on one side, another to another', and 'suddenly',²¹⁶ it is clear, I suppose, that, on the one hand, souls are dispersed in pluralized and divided life of the becoming, into different places of residence and into different parts of the earth, and that, on the other hand, their entering into the body are made for all in one go, insofar as it takes no time for them to animate and settle in. So that the separation between life outside the body and life into the body actually is imperceptible. This is how Plato himself explains in the *Parmenides* the nature of the sudden, which is a sort of 'weird' stuff, as he says there, according to which the passages from a contrary to another happen. It is therefore in this sudden that the entering of souls in bodies are accomplished, and every change either from motion to rest, or from rest to motion.²¹⁷

As a result of all this, it is said that Er 'did not know how and in what way he returned to his body'²¹⁸ – the suddenness of the passage did not allow him to pay attention to it: in fact, in the other sudden events either, we cannot pay attention to how they happen, because the attention requires a certain duration of time, which allows us to observe the beginning, the middle and the end of what is happening – but that, having looked up 'he saw himself at dawn lying on the funeral pyre'²¹⁹ where he had been for twelve days, as it was said in the preamble.

While reading these texts, a conclusion is blindingly obvious, namely that Proclus makes exclusively a *kinematic* use of ἐξαίφνης. In all these passages, he draws an opposition between 'process that occurs suddenly' and 'process that needs a period of time' (or a 'duration/continuance of time': χρόνου παράτασιν²²⁰), so he rediscovers Plato's

²¹¹ ἐξαπίνης which has the same meaning of ἐξαίφνης is almost never employed by the Platonists. By the way, ἐξαπίνης is a hapax in Plato (*Republic*, X 621b3). Proclus uses this word only while he was explaining this passage of Plato.

²¹⁵ English translation: J. M. DILLON, G. R. MORROW (eds.), *Proclus' Commentary on Plato's Parmenides*, Princeton University Press, 1987, p. 215

²¹⁶ PLATO, *Republic*, X 621b3

²¹⁷ In absence of any English translation available, those of Proclus' essays on *Republic* are my own, although they follow very closely the French translation of Festugière.

²¹⁸ PLATO, *Republic*, X 621b5-6

²¹⁹ PLATO, *Republic*, X 621b6-7

²²⁰ PROCLUS, *In Remp*, II 353.29. On παράτασις, see: Ph. HOFFMANN, "Παράτασις. De la description aspectuelle des verbes grecs à une définition du temps dans le néoplatonisme tardif", in *Revue des Etudes Grecques*, t. 96, fasc. 455-459, 1983, p. 1-26

dichotomy between the subset of ἐξαίφνης and the subset of χρόνοι that structures the set of ‘temporal-entities’. Additionally, he characterizes the set of χρόνοι as the set of ‘temporal-items’ for which that is possible to discern a beginning, a middle and an end²²¹.

In regard of kinematics, the most important text is the passage of the Sixteenth Dissertation on the *Republic* in which Proclus explicitly alludes to *Parm.* 156c-d and claims that the ‘sudden’ is a ‘weird’ stuff in which the transition from contrary to contrary occurs. Taking the example of life and death (or, in a Platonic way, of embodiment and uplifting), Proclus seems to allude to the classic puzzle of the ‘instant of change’ already treated by Taurus, maybe too he had in mind the precise text of the *Gorgias* on the ‘sudden’ separation of the soul from the body at the time of death²²². So, according to Trouillard’s words, for Proclus the ‘sudden’ is the ‘neutral’ point in which occurs the transition between two phases²²³, for instance between the phase of reversion and the phase of procession. Albeit he does not discuss the logical and the ontological status of the ‘sudden’ in the text extracted from the Sixteenth Dissertation, the short passage from his commentary on the *Parmenides* is eloquent enough. In this text, Proclus says very quickly that the εἶδος is coming into the sensible world suddenly and not in a period of time. The allusion must be understood in the light of another text of the same commentary²²⁴:

In Parm. IV 873.17-25: Ὡσαύτως γὰρ καὶ χρόνου παντὸς ὑπερήπλωται· πάρεστι γὰρ ἀχρόνως ἅπασι καὶ ἀθρόως· ἐπεὶ καὶ αἱ γενέσεις προπαρασκευαί τινές εἰσι τῆς ἐκείνων μεθέξεως, ὡς προείπομεν, καὶ αὗται μὲν ἐν χρόνῳ πάντως, τὰ δὲ εἶδη τοῖς ἐν γενέσει δίδωσι τὰς ἐαυτῶν μεθέξεις οὐδὲν ὅλως προσδεόμενα τῆς κατὰ τὸν χρόνον παρατάσεως, ἀλλ’ ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ νῦν ἀμερίστῳ ἀμερίστως, ὃ δὴ καὶ μιμεῖται τὴν αἰώνιον αὐτῶν ὑπόστασιν.

Likewise the Forms transcend all time; they are present non-temporally and immediately to all their participants. Although, as we have said before, comings-into-being are conditions preparatory to participation in the Forms, and these are of course temporal events; nevertheless the Forms permit things in the world of generation to participate in them **without any lapse of time at all, indivisibly in an indivisible instant, which is a reflection of their eternal reality.**²²⁵

In the last text, the word ἐξαίφνης is replaced by τῷ νῦν. The understanding of Proclus appears very clearly. Challenging the usual Platonic puzzle of the μέθεξις to explain the causation of the Forms²²⁶, Proclus supports the view that the Form is coming into the sensible realm *suddenly*, namely without any *duration*, because such a way is the most capable of *imitating* the *eternity* of the Forms²²⁷. In other words, by virtue of the fact that the Forms belong to the everlasting realm, their coming-into-sensible should be the less temporal as possible, so the participation occurs *durationless*, of course, after a durative overcoming of the barriers that could prevent its *sudden* reception (so after the demiurgic kneading of the many stages of substrate)²²⁸. Given that the duration is a vivid sign of temporality, therefore of sensibility, avoiding duration must indicate a higher ontological

²²¹ PROCLUS, *In Remp.* II 353.29-354.1

²²² PLATO, *Gorgias*, 523e2-6

²²³ J. TROUILLARD, *L’Un et l’âme selon Proclus*, Les Belles Lettres, 1972, p. 152-153

²²⁴ See: C. LUNA, A.-Ph. SEGONDS (eds.), *Proclus. Commentaire sur le Parménide de Platon*, vol. 4, Les Belles Lettres, 2013, p. 11 n.5 (p. 257)

²²⁵ English translation: J. M. DILLON, G. R. MORROW (eds.), *Proclus’ Commentary on Plato’s Parmenides*, Princeton University Press, 1987, p. 237

²²⁶ PROCLUS, *In Parm.* IV 837.5-890.37

²²⁷ PROCLUS, *In Parm.* VI 844.10-12, 873.24-25

²²⁸ See: PROCLUS, *In Tim.* I 395.13-22 and G. VAN RIEL, “Proclus on Matter and Physical Necessity”, in R. CHIARADONNA, F. TRABATTONI (eds.), *Physics and Philosophy of Nature in Greek Neoplatonism*, Brill, 2009, p. 231-257

position and a greater likeness with the High Diacosms that reign beyond the becoming. For this reason, a durationless coming here below is more suitable for the Forms than a process with duration, even if their instantaneous coming arise after a preparatory demiurgic process with duration²²⁹. Thus, by their sudden appearance, the Forms do not depart from their eternal being, in such a way that their coming into the sensible world *imitate* as far as possible their being. This relation of μίμησις permit to escape the absurdities of the ‘proto-Hegelian’ interpretation of ἐξαίφνης presented above²³⁰, namely the fact that sensible change occurs beyond the time according to a meaningless extratemporal fashion, that is to say according to a view which sustains that the ‘instant of change’ is outside of time and belongs to the everlasting Intelligible realm. Indeed, for Proclus, there is just a relation of *imitation* between the eternity of the Forms and the suddenness of their coming into the sensible world, in such a way that the ἐξαίφνης belongs to the diacosm of becoming and keeps its *kinematic* explanatory strength. Furthermore, the fact that Proclus interprets the ‘sudden’ exclusively in a kinematic fashion is reinforced by the interchangeability between ἐξαίφνης and νῦν that seems to be very usual for the Neoplatonists (given that such interchangeability has already been discovered in Iamblichus and Simplicius).

Insofar as the suddenness of the coming is a characteristic of the appearance of the Forms, beyond the kinematic aspect of the ‘sudden’, Proclus’ understanding is not devoid of a mystical overtone. Following the examples of Plotinus who keeps the suddenness for the appearance of the One and of Iamblichus who often uses ἐξαίφνης when he was speaking about the Gods, Proclus has a deep tendency to link together the ‘suddenness’ of a change and the items belonging to non-sensible diacosms, especially to the soul-realm. Indeed, a list of examples of change for which Proclus uses the word ἐξαίφνης shows the link with the σκοπός of the Third Hypothesis.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| <i>In Alc</i> , 80.9-13 | The <i>demonic</i> irradiation that enlightens suddenly all Socrates’ soul, with an allusion to the psychic triad : διανοια-δόξα-πνεῦμα/αἴσθησις |
| <i>In Tim</i> , I 112.25-113.7 | The transfers of the souls downwards or upwards occurring with changes in their pneumatic clothing ²³¹ , notably the descent of the soul into the last vehicle (ὄχημα), namely into the body ²³² . The ‘sudden’ meteorological changes observable on the occasion of their psychic transfers can be explained by the greater demonic nature of some souls and the chemical properties of the psychic vehicle, as that is the case for Phaethon. |

²²⁹ Proclus’ solution for the coming of the Forms has an obvious ‘family-resemblance’ with the Aristotelian puzzle of the ‘instant of coming-to-be’, especially with the solution of Averroes, see: C. CERAMI, *Génération et Substance. Aristote et Averroès entre physique et métaphysique*, de Gruyter, 2015, p. 402-421 and, for Alexander: M. RASHED (ed.), *Alexandre d’Aphrodise, Commentaire perdu à la Physique d’Aristote (livres IV-VIII). Les scholies byzantines*, de Gruyter, 2011, p. 102-105

²³⁰ J. WAHL, *Etude sur le Parménide de Platon*, F. Rieder, 1926, p. 167-172; W. BEIERWALTES, “Exaiphnês oder: die Paradoxie des Augenblicks”, *Philosophisches Jahrbuch*, 74, 1966/1967, p. 271-283 and L. BRISSON, “L’instant, le temps, et l’éternité dans le Parménide (155e-157b) de Platon”, in *Dialogue*, 9, 1970-3, p. 389-396

²³¹ See: PROCLUS, *Elements of Theology*, §196, §206-210 (on the Neoplatonic doctrine of the vehicle, see: E. R. DODDS (ed.), *Proclus. The Elements of Theology*, Oxford Clarendon Press, 1963, p. 313-321; I. HADOT, *Le problème du néoplatonisme alexandrin: Hiéroclès et Simplicius*, Etudes Augustiniennes, 1978, p. 98-106, p. 181-187 and J. TROUILLARD, “Réflexions sur l’ὄχημα dans les *Eléments de Théologie* de Proclus”, in *Revue des Etudes Grecques*, 70, fasc. 329-330, 1957, p. 102-107)

²³² See: PROCLUS, *In Tim*, III 298-299

In Remp, II 352.23-353.7 The transfers of the souls downwards or upwards, more particularly the embodiment of the souls which occurs suddenly, without any duration, in such a way that the bodies become alive instantaneously. (Proclus comments the ἐξαίφνης of *Republic*, X 621b6)

In Remp, II 353.26-354.2 Comment on *Republic*, X 621b5: Er did not remember how he has been embodied, owing to the suddenness of the embodiment.

The fact that Proclus' uses of ἐξαίφνης are often focused on the ascent and the descent of the non-divine soul, especially on its embodiment, points out the context of his reading, namely the exegesis of the Third Hypothesis (view, of course, already highly sustained by the explicit reference to *Parm*, 156c-d in the Sixteenth Dissertation). Damascius' discussion on the σκοπός of the Third Hypothesis seems to support this view, insofar as Damascius begins his purpose by saying that this hypothesis is concerned with "the soul which goes down into the becoming, then climbs back up"²³³, making an obvious reference to one of the last theorems of Proclus' *Elements of Theology*²³⁴. Inasmuch as Damascius likely had Proclus' *In Parm* in front of him when he had writing his commentary²³⁵, that seems rational to suppose that Proclus had linked together the Third Hypothesis and the journey of the souls.

Besides, in his division of the Parmenides, Proclus has followed his master Syrianus²³⁶, notably by distinguishing three kinds of souls²³⁷, in such a way that the Third Hypothesis is devoted only to the demonic and human souls which precisely accomplish procession and reversion, and plunge into sensible water (that is not completely the case for the divine souls, namely the unparticipated soul which is extra-mundane or hypercosmic²³⁸, the World-Soul²³⁹, the souls of the seven planets and of the fixed stars²⁴⁰, and the souls of the gods below the moon²⁴¹). Then, Proclus would have emphasized the superior nature of these lower souls by claiming that the coming of these souls share the suddenness with the coming of the Forms that in themselves inhabit into the Intelligible realm. In this way, the suddenness of the appearance becomes a differentiating sign of the superior diacosms (in particular the Intelligible and the Psychic), insofar as one of their common characteristics is that their inhabitants enter into the sensible realm without any duration.

However, from an exegetical point of view, Proclus' understanding of the ἐξαίφνης seems to entail a difficulty concerning the 'real' σκοπός of the Third Hypothesis, inasmuch as, in Proclus' interpretation, Plato would focus on the modalities of the psychic coming into the sensible world rather than on the very nature of demonic and human souls. For scrupulously respecting the schedule of the Hypotheses, he should have explained the

²³³ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm*, 247.8-9 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 3.8-10)

²³⁴ PROCLUS, *Elements of Theology*, §206

²³⁵ L. G. WESTERINK (ed.), *Damascius. Lectures on the Philebus*, North-Holland, 1959, p. xv-xxii, "Damascius, commentateur de Platon", in P. HADOT, P.-M. SCHUHL (eds.), *Le Néoplatonisme*, CNRS, 1971, p. 253-260 and C. STEEL, *The Changing Self. A Study on the Soul in Later Neoplatonism: Iamblichus, Damascius and Priscianus*, Brussel, 1978, p. 79-80

²³⁶ PROCLUS, *In Parm*, VI 1063.5-1064.12 (Fragments of Syrianus' *In Parm* are available in: S. KLITENIC WEAR, *The Teachings of Syrianus on Plato's Timaeus and Parmenides*, Brill, 2011)

²³⁷ PROCLUS, *Platonic Theology*, I 12 56.19-57.14 (see: *Elements of Theology*, §184 and for this classification: E. R. DODDS (ed.), *Proclus. The Elements of Theology*, Oxford Clarendon Press, 1963, p. 295-296)

²³⁸ PROCLUS, *Elements of Theology*, §164

²³⁹ PROCLUS, *In Tim*, III 290.3-4

²⁴⁰ PROCLUS, *In Tim*, III 255.10-19

²⁴¹ PROCLUS, *In Tim*, III 255.20-23

ἐξαίφνης as an element of the psychic ‘one-and-many’ nature. None of Proclean texts in which ἐξαίφνης appears can put us in mind that Proclus had elaborated such an exegesis. However, Damascius alludes to that kind of explanation from Proclus. Indeed, at the beginning of his answer of the eighth issue devoted to the nature of the ἐξαίφνης, Damascius writes:

In Parm, 262.8-11²⁴²: Τί οὖν τοῦτό ἐστι τὸ ἐξαίφνης, καὶ τί τὸ ἄχρονον, ὅπερ ὄγδοον ἦν; Ἄρα τὸ αἰώνιον τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ τὸ ὄν αὐτό, ὡς φησιν; καὶ πῶς μέσον τῶν κινήσεων καὶ τῶν στάσεων ἀναφαίνεται; ἢ ὡς πρὸ ἀμφοῖν. Ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ γοῦν, φησὶν, καὶ περὶ αὐτοῦ ἡ γένεσις.

What is this sudden and what is the timeless? That was the eighth issue. Is it the eternal of the soul and its very being, as [Proclus] says? And how can it manifest itself between the motions and the rests? He answers: insofar as it is anterior to both; at least, that is from it, he says, and around it that the becoming proceeds.²⁴³

As Trouillard has perfectly seen²⁴⁴, a brief passage of Proclus’ commentary on *Timaeus* can sustain Damascius’ testimony:

In Tim, III 215.17-23: ἀφαιρεῖ γὰρ αὐτῶν ἅμα τὸ ἀθάνατον καὶ ἄλυτον καὶ τίθησι πάλιν διὰ τῆς τῶν ἀντικειμένων ἀναιρέσεως· τὰ γὰρ μέσα τοιαύτην ἔλαχε φύσιν, οὐκ ἐπιδεχομένην τὸν τῶν ἄκρων λόγον καὶ πάλιν ἀμφοτέρα δοκοῦσαν περιέχειν, ὥσπερ εἴ τις καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ἀμέριστόν τε ἅμα καλοῖη καὶ μεριστὴν ὡς ἐξ ἀμφοῖν οὖσαν, καὶ οὔτε ἀμέριστον οὔτε μεριστὴν ὡς τῶν ἄκρων ἐξηλλαγμένην·

For the Demiurge takes away from them together the immortal and the indissoluble, and again confers these on them through a subversion of their opposites. For media are allotted this nature, not receiving the nature of the extremes, and appearing to comprehend the whole of both. Just as if some one should call the soul together impartible and partible, as consisting of both, and neither impartible, nor partible, as being different from the extremes.²⁴⁵

So, it must be noted that the kinematic aspect of Proclean ἐξαίφνης has hidden a deepest understanding of the Third Hypothesis. Indeed, the fact that *In Tim*, III 215.17.23 and the σκοπός of the Third Hypothesis are closely linked is blindingly obvious, given that, at least from Plotinus, the soul is understood as being both one-and-many²⁴⁶ (following *Timaeus*, 35a) and neither-many-nor-one (following *Parm*, 155e-156a). *In Tim*, III 215.17.23 shows us that the logical status of the ‘sudden’ has actually been transferred from his original background to the intermediary soul whose Proclus says that its φύσις consists to be neither divisible nor indivisible, *and* both divisible and indivisible – that is to say: neither A nor ¬A, *and* both A and ¬A. Thus, in a sense, the soul ‘puts away’ or ‘destroys-and-preserves’ both the contrary states. In Proclus (and, as we will see, in Damascius), there is a kind of ‘proto-Hegelian’ understanding of the soul by virtue of its function of mediation between the indivisible higher principles and the divisible bodies²⁴⁷. Such a ‘proto-Hegelian’ overtone should be qualified however, given that this logical description of the soul is only due to the difficulty for understanding his ‘strange’

²⁴² = W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 29.1-5

²⁴³ In absence of any English translation available, those of Damascius’ commentary are my own, although they follow very closely the French translation of Westerink and Combès.

²⁴⁴ J. TROUILLARD, *L’Un et l’âme selon Proclus*, Les Belles Lettres, 1972, p. 152-154

²⁴⁵ English translation (modified): Th. TAYLOR (ed.), *The Commentaries of Proclus on the Timaeus of Plato in Five Books*, vol. 2, London, 1820, p. 349

²⁴⁶ PLOTINUS, *Enneads*, IV 2 [4], 2.52-55, V 1 [10], 8.24-27

²⁴⁷ PROCLUS, *Elements of Theology*, §190

intermediary and mixed nature²⁴⁸. Naturally, insofar as it is logically characterized by its neutrality (*neither in A-state nor in $\neg A$ -state*), the ‘sudden’ constitutes a very good candidate for expressing the psychic nature.

Following Damascius, it seems that Proclus would have brought the nature of the soul and the ‘sudden’ as follows: firstly, the ‘sudden’ would constitute the being of the soul, and, inasmuch as this being is eternal²⁴⁹, the ‘sudden’ is beyond the time; secondly, the ‘sudden’ would be the *dynamic* kernel of the soul inasmuch as that is from the psychic ‘sudden’ that the becoming spreads out, and with it his inherent alternation from a contrary to another, in such a way that the psychic ‘sudden’ can be said ‘anterior to the opposites’; thirdly, the logical status of the psychic ‘sudden’ is to be neither in A-state nor in $\neg A$ -state (because the ‘sudden’ is anterior to them) *and* both A and $\neg A$ (because they proceed from the ‘sudden’) at once; and fourthly, Proclus would illustrate the nature of the psychic ‘sudden’ and its relation with the flow of becoming by the geometric image of a circle whose the psychic ‘sudden’ would be the centre and whose the becoming would be the periphery²⁵⁰.

Unfortunately, in the rest of his very inspired analysis of the ‘sudden’, Damascius gives us almost nothing about the detail of Proclus’ conflation between the soul and the ‘sudden’, albeit he is not stingy with criticisms about the doctrine of his predecessor. His silence and his criticisms could easily be interpreted as a sign of the fact that Proclus’ conception was rationally unsatisfying, even for a Neoplatonist.

I shall argue that the key to understand the psychic ‘sudden’ can be found in Proclus’ kinetics (in this section, I’m focus only on the explanation of *physical* motion, laying aside the other kinds of motions allowed by Proclus, notably the intellectual one²⁵¹). Proclus’ conception of motion is quite different from Plotinus’, in particular he departs from his predecessor on the meaning of αὐτοκίνητος.

In the *Elements of Theology*, Proclus had a threefold ‘Plotinian’ classification of motion that he borrows from the earlier Neoplatonic scholarship²⁵² (and that Damascius will

²⁴⁸ PROCLUS, *In Tim*, III 25.19-24 (on its intermediary nature, see: *In Tim*, II 127.26-132.3; on its mixed and homogenous nature, see: *In Tim*, II 149.25-29, 162.26-163.10, 166.17-19). On Proclus’ acceptance of the Law of Contradiction that is, for him, restricted to what of which there can be a possible *propositional* knowledge (therefore, not for the One and, probably, not for the soul), see: C. STEEL, “Beyond the Principle of Contradiction? Proclus’ ‘Parmenides’ and the Origin of Negative Theology”, in H. VON MARTIN PICKAVÉ (ed.), *Die Logik des Transzendentalen*, de Gruyter, 2003, p. 581-599. For a brilliant formalization of Proclus’ logic, see: J. N. MARTIN, “Proclus and the Neoplatonic Syllogistic”, in *Journal of Philosophical Logic*, 30-3, 2001, p. 187-240

²⁴⁹ PROCLUS, *Elements of Theology*, §191-192

²⁵⁰ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm*, 247.12, 20-25 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 29.5, 17-30.3). This image is confirmed by some texts of Proclus: PROCLUS, *In Tim*, II 130.27-28

²⁵¹ PROCLUS, *In Parm*, VII 1152.15-1172.26. The puzzle of the Neoplatonic ‘spiritual motion’ has been studied in depth in: S. E. GERSH, *Κίνησις ἀκίνητος. A Study of Spiritual Motion in the Philosophy of Proclus*, Brill, 1973, especially p. 7-26 and p. 111-117 (Gersh interprets those non-physical motions as being ‘dynamic logical relations’). See also: J. OPSOMER, “The Integration of Aristotelian Physics in a Neoplatonic Context: Proclus on Movers and Divisibility”, in R. CHIARADONNA, F. TRABATTONI (eds.), *Physics and Philosophy of Nature in Greek Neoplatonism*, Brill, 2009, p. 191-192, p. 214-229

²⁵² As far as I know, before Proclus, such a terminology for this threefold classification can only be found in Apollinaris of Laodicea known for his Platonic erudition and its philosophical ability, in such a way that this terminology could at least go back to the teaching of some Middle-Platonist circle: GREGORY OF NYSSA, *Antirrheticus adversus Apollinarium*, III.1 192.9-23 and JUSTINIANUS, *Contra Monophysitas*, §61 in E. SCHWARTZ (ed.), *Drei dogmatische Schriften Iustinians*, München, 1939, p. 17 (= H. LIETZMANN (ed.), *Apollinaris von Laodicea und seine Schule. Texte und Untersuchungen*,

borrow too²⁵³), namely the distinction between intellective immobility (τὸ ἀκίνητον), the causative process of psychic self-mover (τὸ αὐτοκίνητον), and the sensible and extended process of the other-moved (τὸ ἑτεροκίνητον)²⁵⁴:

Indivisibility	Intellect:	immobility (τὸ ἀκίνητον)	(dynamics)
	Soul:	self-mover (τὸ αὐτοκίνητον)	
Divisibility	Body:	other-moved (τὸ ἑτεροκίνητον)	(kinematics)

But, in other works, Proclus had a more elaborated hierarchy that respects more the Principle of Continuity in the course of the procession from the One to the matter²⁵⁵. This principle means that “since the processions of beings leave no void, even less so than do the positions of bodies; everywhere there are intermediate natures between the extremes, which provide their connection with one another”²⁵⁶. We can schematize this second hierarchy as follows²⁵⁷:

Indivisibility	Intellect:	unmoved mover	dynamics
	Soul:	self-mover and self-moved	dynamics & kinematics
Divisibility	Nature:	mover and moved	
	Body:	moved and no mover	kinematics

These two classifications are not mutually exclusive, since Proclus links them together in his commentary on *Timaeus*²⁵⁸. However, their conflation is not devoid of trouble.

Tübingen, 1904, frg. 74, 107, p. 222, p. 232). On Apollinaris the Younger, see: E. MÜLHENBERG, *Apollinaris von Laodicea*, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1969

²⁵³ DAMASCIUS, *De Princ.* I 29.25-37.2, 261.15-267.8 (= W&C, vol. 1, 1986, p. 42.9-53.28; vol. 3, 1991, p. 70.1-78.24). See also: SIMPLICIUS, *In Epict. Ench.* 1.84-144, 433-441, 38.310-326. This threefold classification can also be found in Hermias, Priscianus, Olympiodorus, Philoponus, and, of course, in many Byzantine Platonizers, for instance in Michael Psellus and John Italus. See: I. HADOT, *Le problème du néoplatonisme alexandrin: Hiéroclès et Simplicius*, Etudes Augustiniennes, 1978, p. 168

²⁵⁴ PROCLUS, *Elements of Theology*, §14, §20

²⁵⁵ PROCLUS, *Platonic Theology*, I 14 60.20, 61.19-22. On the Principle of Continuity, see: *Elements of Theology*, §28, *Platonic Theology*, III 2 6.21-24, *In Tim.* I 378.22-379.9, *De providentia et fato et eo quod in nobis*, §20. On the meaning of the Proclean multiplication of intermediary-entities, see: J. TROUILLARD, “Le sens des médiations proclésiennes”, in *Revue Philosophique de Louvain*, 55-47, 1957, p. 331-342 and *La Mystagogie de Proclus*, Les Belles Lettres, 1982, p. 71-80. On the importance of such a Principle of Continuity for the ‘Chain of Beings’, see: A. O. LOVEJOY, *The Great Chain of Beings*, Harvard University Press, 1936, p. 50-66, and for its Iamblichean origin: E. R. DODDS (ed.), *Proclus. The Elements of Theology*, Oxford Clarendon Press, 1963, p. xxi-xxii. By the way, Th. WHITTAKER, *The Neo-Platonists. A Study in the History of Hellenism*, Cambridge University Press, 1918, p. 288 has suggested that Leibniz’ reflections on the continuum are partially influenced by his readings of the Neoplatonists. Then, such a suggestion has been followed in: J. TROUILLARD, “La Monadologie de Proclus”, in *Revue Philosophique de Louvain*, 57-55, 1959, p. 309-320

²⁵⁶ PROCLUS, *De providentia et fato et eo quod in nobis*, §20 (a little modified). English translation: C. STEEL (ed.), *Proclus. On Providence*, Bloomsbury, 2007, p. 51 (see also: B. STROBEL, *Proklos. Tria Opuscula. Textkritisch kommentierte Retroversion der Übersetzung Wilhelms von Moerbeke*, de Gruyter, 2014, p. 670)

²⁵⁷ PROCLUS, *Platonic Theology*, I 14, *In Tim.* II 151.24-27, *In Parm.* III 795.33-35. On the four-part classification of the levels of reality, see: E. R. DODDS (ed.), *Proclus. The Elements of Theology*, Oxford Clarendon Press, 1963, p. 16-17, p. 201 and S. E. GERSH, *Κίνησις ἀκίνητος. A Study of Spiritual Motion in the Philosophy of Proclus*, Brill, 1973, p. 106-111

²⁵⁸ PROCLUS, *In Tim.* I 373.4-18

The three-part hierarchy emphasizes a strong separation between the sensible realm and the levels which are beyond by marking a symmetric boundary between dynamics and kinematics. In this way, such a division is in total agreement with Plato's teaching²⁵⁹. On the other hand, the four-part hierarchy sounds a little less Platonic. Indeed, it appears that Proclus' physics is potentially *platonically* problematic, given that Proclus does not separate too drastically dynamics' and kinematics' realms. Furthermore, even if Proclus claims that only incorporeals are really causative²⁶⁰, he seems to endorse entirely Aristotle's kinematics, as it is obvious in the *Elements of Physics* (of course, that does not mean either that Proclus says that Aristotle's and Plato's kinetics are utterly devoid of any difference²⁶¹, or that the *Elements of Physics* are devoid of any Neoplatonic ingredient²⁶²). Insofar as Plato and Aristotle made opposing choices in regard to the principles, the Neoplatonic realization of their harmonization can only be very difficult, especially in physics. Such a difficulty explains the weakness and the *ad-hoc* characteristic of some Neoplatonic attempts, for instance the Simplicius' terminological one on the self-motion²⁶³. That is clear that Proclus does not avoid the pitfall of Platonic heterodoxy with his four-part classification, inasmuch as such a hierarchy implies that the Aristotelian kinematics (more precisely: *Phys.* 8.4-5²⁶⁴) sets the tone to the distinction of the subordinated ontological levels²⁶⁵.

For Proclus, the soul is both αὐτοκίνητον²⁶⁶ and αὐθυπόστατον²⁶⁷. This last characteristic means that although the soul is not really a self-causative entity (by virtue of its dependence on the Demiurge²⁶⁸), even so the soul remains highly active in its own process of constitution in the course of which the soul *collaborates* with its demiurgic cause, in

²⁵⁹ J. VUILLEMIN, "The Systems of Plato and Aristotle Compared as to their Contribution to Physics", in W. SPOHN, B. C. VAN FRAASSEN, B. SKYRMS (eds.), *Existence and Explanation. Essays presented in Honor of Karel Lambert*, Springer, 1991, p. 197-201

²⁶⁰ PROCLUS, *Elements of Theology*, §80

²⁶¹ SIMPLICIUS, *In Phys.* 404.16-33. See: C. STEEL, "Why Should We Prefer Plato's *Timaeus* to Aristotle's *Physics*? Proclus' Critique of Aristotle's Causal Explanation of the Physical World", in R. W. SHARPLES, A. SHEPPARD (eds.), *Ancient Approaches to Plato's Timaeus*, Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies Suppl. 78, London, 2003, p. 175-187

²⁶² See: J. OPSOMER, "The Integration of Aristotelian Physics in a Neoplatonic Context: Proclus on Movers and Divisibility", in R. CHIARADONNA, F. TRABATTONI (eds.), *Physics and Philosophy of Nature in Greek Neoplatonism*, Brill, 2009, p. 193-203

²⁶³ SIMPLICIUS, *In Phys.* 421.3-422.9, 1247.27-1250.31. On Simplicius and the ideal of harmonization when he discussed kinetics: P. GOLITSIS, *Les Commentaires de Simplicius et Philopon à la Physique d'Aristote. Tradition et innovation*, de Gruyter, 2008, p. 114-121

²⁶⁴ Indeed, the kinematics of the *Laws* neglects the distinction between 'unmoved mover' and 'self-mover': PLATO, *Laws*, X 893b-894d

²⁶⁵ On the Aristotelianism of Proclus' physics and its problems, see: J. OPSOMER, "The Integration of Aristotelian Physics in a Neoplatonic Context: Proclus on Movers and Divisibility", in R. CHIARADONNA, F. TRABATTONI (eds.), *Physics and Philosophy of Nature in Greek Neoplatonism*, Brill, 2009, p. 189-229

²⁶⁶ PROCLUS, *Elements of Theology*, §20, *In Alc.* 225.14-226.8

²⁶⁷ PROCLUS, *Elements of Theology*, §191. On the notion of αὐθυπόστατον, see: PROCLUS, *Elements of Theology*, §40-52; E. R. DODDS (ed.), *Proclus. The Elements of Theology*, Oxford Clarendon Press, 1963, p. 223-224 and J. WHITTAKER, "The Historical Background of Proclus' doctrine of the αὐθυπόστατα", in H. DÖRRIE (ed.), *De Jamblique à Proclus*, Vandoeuvres/Geneva, 1975, p. 193-237. On the two properties of self-motion and self-constitution, see: C. STEEL, "Proklos über Selbstreflexion und Selbstbegründung", in M. PERKAMS, R. M. PICCIONE (eds.), *Proklos. Methode, Seelenlehre, Metaphysik*, Brill, 2006, p. 230-255

²⁶⁸ The causal dependence of the soul on the Intellect is explicit in: PROCLUS, *Elements of Theology*, §193 (see: §76) and *In Tim.* II 119.29-132.3

such a way that the soul can be said both constituted by itself and constituted by another²⁶⁹. In the same way, its self-motion is subordinated to the immobility of its intellectual *efficient cause*²⁷⁰, as if there is a residue of *passivity* into the being of the soul. Such a suspicion is strengthened by the fact that, following a distinction found in Aristotle's *Physics*²⁷¹, Proclus claims that the soul is not an *unmoved mover*, but only a *self-mover and self-moved*. If so, given that the Aristotelian analysis of *physical* self-motion involves at least a conceptual differentiation into the αὐτοκίνητον between an active-mover and a passive-moved 'parts'²⁷², Proclus seems to accept a genuine *passivity* of the *spiritual* soul²⁷³. Of course, Proclus has tried to escape such an awkward consequence, by a conflation between *self-motion* and *reversion* (i.e. *self-thinking*) that involves the identity of the passive-moved with the active-mover 'parts'²⁷⁴ (which is permitted by its incorporeality²⁷⁵), but this solution permits only to avoid the mereological fragmentation of the soul, surely not the fact that its self-activity goes hand in hand with a kind of self-passivity²⁷⁶. And nothing is more foreign to Plato's thought²⁷⁷. Thus, when Proclus claims, along with Plotinus, that the soul is in itself unaffected or impassive, contrary to its faculties and its acts²⁷⁸, he would presumably be incoherent with his own theory of αὐτοκίνησις. But, in fact, in other texts, firstly Proclus rejects forcefully the Plotinian view

²⁶⁹ M. RASHED, "Proclus, commentaire perdu sur la Palinodie du Phèdre: vestiges byzantins", in *L'héritage aristotélicien. Textes inédits de l'Antiquité*, Les Belles Lettres, 2016, p. 500-504

²⁷⁰ PROCLUS, *In Eucl*, 32.7-13, *Platonic Theology*, I 14 60.23-61.1. To some extent, the puzzle arises from the fact that intellectual causation – and, consequently, self-motion – is an *efficient* causation and not only a *final* one – in other words, Intellect and Soul are ποιητικαὶ αἰτίαι. On this point, see: J. OPSOMER, "The Integration of Aristotelian Physics in a Neoplatonic Context: Proclus on Movers and Divisibility", in R. CHIARADONNA, F. TRABATTONI (eds.), *Physics and Philosophy of Nature in Greek Neoplatonism*, Brill, 2009, p. 191-192, p. 198-200, p. 206-207 and C. STEEL, "Aristote et Proclus sur la causalité efficiente de l'Intellect divin", in J. PEPIN, H. D. SAFFREY (eds.), *Proclus: Lecteur et interprète des Anciens*, CNRS, 1987, p. 213-225

²⁷¹ ARISTOTLE, *Phys*, 8.5 256b27-258b9 (for a commentary on this section, see: D. BLYTH, *Aristotle's Ever-turning World in Physics 8: Analysis and Commentary*, Brill, 2016, p. 104-159)

²⁷² ARISTOTLE, *Phys*, 8.5 257a31-258b4

²⁷³ On this point, see: J. OPSOMER, "The Integration of Aristotelian Physics in a Neoplatonic Context: Proclus on Movers and Divisibility", in R. CHIARADONNA, F. TRABATTONI (eds.), *Physics and Philosophy of Nature in Greek Neoplatonism*, Brill, 2009, p. 191-192, p. 203-209 and S. MENN, "Self-motion and reflection: Hermias and Proclus on the harmony of Plato and Aristotle on the soul", in J. WILBERDING, Ch. HORN (eds.), *Neoplatonism and the Philosophy of Nature*, Oxford Clarendon Press, 2012, p. 57-58

²⁷⁴ PROCLUS, *Elements of Theology*, §17. See: J. OPSOMER, "The Integration of Aristotelian Physics in a Neoplatonic Context: Proclus on Movers and Divisibility", in R. CHIARADONNA, F. TRABATTONI (eds.), *Physics and Philosophy of Nature in Greek Neoplatonism*, Brill, 2009, p. 208-209 and S. MENN, "Self-motion and reflection: Hermias and Proclus on the harmony of Plato and Aristotle on the soul", in J. WILBERDING, Ch. HORN (eds.), *Neoplatonism and the Philosophy of Nature*, Oxford Clarendon Press, 2012, p. 60

²⁷⁵ PROCLUS, *Elements of Theology*, §15

²⁷⁶ PROCLUS, *In Tim*, II 147.33-148.2

²⁷⁷ For this Platonic thesis in Plotinus, see: PLOTINUS, *Enneads*, III 6 [26], 1-5, IV 4 [28] 13.22-25 and Ch. I. NOBLE, "Plotinus' Unaffected Soul", in *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, 51, 2016, p. 231-281

²⁷⁸ PROCLUS, *In Tim*, III 330.9-331.2 and in his commentary on the *Enneads* as it appears in: M. PSELLUS, *De omnifaria doctrina*, §33.12-14

on psychic absolute impassivity²⁷⁹, and, secondly, seems to restrain the impassivity for the *substantiality* of the soul, keeping quiet about the other superficial kinds of change²⁸⁰.

For Plato and, more clearly, for Plotinus, as we have seen, the soul is entirely active, inasmuch as the causative self-motion is a complete ἐνέργεια outside space and time, in other words, without residual potentiality. In this sense, the Platonic soul is closest to Aristotle's unmoved mover than to Aristotle's self-mover. Thus, the soul entirely belongs to dynamics, and kinematics is just concerned with the sensible bodies. The state of affairs is quite different for Proclus. Indeed, the *passivity* of the soul – that can maybe be authorized by some passages of the *Phaedrus* and of the *Laws* however²⁸¹ – forces the soul into kinematics (even if that is only a weird kind of *spiritual* kinematics²⁸² of which the *physical* kinematics would be the offspring²⁸³). And this is not avoided by the fact that the force acting on the soul is the soul itself, Proclus' physics actually entails that the soul belongs both to dynamics and kinematics, or, in other words, that the soul is both its own cause and its own effect²⁸⁴. They are not alone, the beings of the next level – namely the enmattered entities (as the enmattered forms and qualities) referring to the level of Nature²⁸⁵ – are still motive forces²⁸⁶, in such a way that they are both dynamic and kinematic items too. This confusion between dynamics' and kinematics' realms²⁸⁷ is not without important repercussion on Proclus' understanding of ἐξαίφνης *qua* 'eternal of the soul'.

Albeit its being is outside of time, the activity of the soul unfolds in time²⁸⁸, while the preceding (intellective) levels of reality have both their beings and their activities in

²⁷⁹ PROCLUS, *In Alc*, 227.2-228.7

²⁸⁰ PROCLUS, *Platonic Theology*, I 19 93.7-12: Λέγεται δὲ καὶ ἡ ψυχικὴ διακόσμησις αἰεὶ κατὰ ταῦτά τὴν οὐσίαν ἐστῶσαν κεκτῆσθαι, καὶ ὁρθῶς λέγεται, πάντη γάρ ἐστιν **ἀπαθὴς κατὰ τὴν οὐσίαν**· ἀλλὰ τὰς ἐνεργείας εἰς χρόνον παρεκτεινομένας ἔχει καί, ὥς φησιν ὁ ἐν Φαίδρῳ Σωκράτης, ἄλλοτε ἄλλα νοεῖ νοητὰ καὶ ἐν ἄλλοις καὶ ἄλλοις εἶδεσιν γίνεται περιπορευομένη τὸν νοῦν. See also: *Elements of Theology*, §76, §193. On Proclus and the substantial impassivity of the soul, see: C. STEEL, *The Changing Self. A Study on the Soul in Later Neoplatonism: Iamblichus, Damascius and Priscianus*, Brussel, 1978, p. 46-47, p. 69-73

²⁸¹ PLATO, *Phaedrus*, 245c-d (see: c7-8 and d7), *Laws*, X 894c-d. See: J. OPSOMER, "The Integration of Aristotelian Physics in a Neoplatonic Context: Proclus on Movers and Divisibility", in R. CHIARADONNA, F. TRABATTONI (eds.), *Physics and Philosophy of Nature in Greek Neoplatonism*, Brill, 2009, p. 191-192, p. 190, n.7

²⁸² PROCLUS, *In Eucl*, 18.22-24, *In Parm*, VII 1157.2-28

²⁸³ PROCLUS, *Platonic Theology*, I 14 63.10-14

²⁸⁴ PROCLUS, *Elements of Theology*, §46

²⁸⁵ PROCLUS, *In Tim*, I 10.13-11.20, II 25.6-23, 139.17-30. On this level, see: Ch. HELMIG, "Die atmende Form in der Materie. Einige Überlegungen zum ἔνυλον εἶδος in der Philosophie des Proklos", in M. PERKAMS, R. M. PICCIONE (eds.), *Proklos. Methode, Seelenlehre, Metaphysik*, Brill, 2006, p. 259-278 and J. OPSOMER, "The Integration of Aristotelian Physics in a Neoplatonic Context: Proclus on Movers and Divisibility", in R. CHIARADONNA, F. TRABATTONI (eds.), *Physics and Philosophy of Nature in Greek Neoplatonism*, Brill, 2009, p. 210-213. Sometimes, Proclus ascribes a lesser kind of self-motion to Nature, see: *In Tim*, I 12.20-25. On the other hand, sometimes, the enmattered forms are just described as other-moved, see: *Platonic Theology*, IV 19 55.26-56.3

²⁸⁶ PROCLUS, *Platonic Theology*, I 14 62.1-12

²⁸⁷ Perfectly seen by Opsomer: J. OPSOMER, "The Integration of Aristotelian Physics in a Neoplatonic Context: Proclus on Movers and Divisibility", in R. CHIARADONNA, F. TRABATTONI (eds.), *Physics and Philosophy of Nature in Greek Neoplatonism*, Brill, 2009, p. 213

²⁸⁸ PROCLUS, *Elements of Theology*, §191, *In Tim*, II 128.18-19, *Platonic Theology*, I 14 66.21-22

eternity²⁸⁹, and while the following levels of reality, namely the physical ones, have their being and their activities in time²⁹⁰. By this way, the soul expresses very well its intermediary nature consisting to be both a being and a becoming²⁹¹. That has never been remarked that the Proclean distinction between the eternal ὄν of the soul and its temporal γένεσις has a ‘family-likeness’ with the Leibnizian distinction between *vis* and *actio*²⁹². Of course, there is a great difference however, namely the fact that Leibniz integrates a principle of equivalence between full cause and entire effect within his dynamics, while Proclus respects the classic Neoplatonic doctrine of causation according to which the effect is always weaker than its cause²⁹³.

What means the distinction between force and action? This innovation of the years 1689-1690 constitutes the final step of Leibniz’s analysis of motion. Before, at least since the dynamic turn of *De Concursu corporum*²⁹⁴ that succeed to the writing of the *Pacidius Philalethi*, Leibniz was focused on the force acting on the bodies rather than on their motions understood kinematically (viz. as trajectories analysed in geometrical or topological fashions). From then on, these corporeal motions are confined to the level of appearance, losing their status of genuine being, in such a way that the ‘true’ science of motion becomes dynamics, lowering kinematics at a lesser scientific rank. That Leibniz’s move is highly Platonizing is blindingly obvious²⁹⁵. Yet, there is more. Indeed, the difference between *force* and *action* overlaps the Proclean differentiation between the being of the soul and its temporal activity. This final step of Leibniz’s dynamics appears

²⁸⁹ PROCLUS, *Elements of Theology*, §104, §106, §169, *Platonic Theology*, I 14 66.23-26

²⁹⁰ PROCLUS, *In Parm.*, III 795.25-796.11

²⁹¹ PROCLUS, *Elements of Theology*, §50, §107

²⁹² On the difference and its metaphysical implications, see: A. ROBINET, *Architectonique disjonctive, automates systémiques et idéalité transcendante dans l’Œuvre de G. W. Leibniz*, Vrin, 1986, p. 253-283, p. 357-360

²⁹³ PROCLUS, *Elements of Theology*, §7, §27. See: E. R. DODDS (ed.), *Proclus. The Elements of Theology*, Oxford Clarendon Press, 1963, p. 193-194 and A. C. LLOYD, “The Principle That the Cause Is Greater than Its Effect”, in *Phronesis*, 21-2, 1976, p. 146-156

²⁹⁴ G. W. LEIBNIZ, *De Concursu corporum* (written in 1678 and edited in: M. FICHANT (ed.), *G. W. Leibniz. La réforme de la dynamique. De corporum concursu (1678) et autres textes inédits*, Vrin, 1994, p. 69-337). See: A. ROBINET, *Architectonique disjonctive, automates systémiques et idéalité transcendante dans l’Œuvre de G. W. Leibniz*, Vrin, 1986, p. 211-225. Some aspects of this work – in particular, the principle of equivalence between full cause and entire effect – have already been anticipated in the proto-dynamical *De Arcanis Motus* of 1676: G. W. LEIBNIZ, *De Arcanis motus et Mechanica ad puram Geometriam reducendam* (written in spring 1676 and edited in: H.-J. HESS, “Die unveröffentlichten naturwissenschaftlichen und technischen Arbeiten von G. W. Leibniz aus der Zeit seines Parisaufenthaltes”, in *Leibniz à Paris (1671-1676)*, *Studia Leibnitiana* Suppl. 17, Wiesbaden, 1978, p. 202-205). See: A. ROBINET, *Architectonique disjonctive, automates systémiques et idéalité transcendante dans l’Œuvre de G. W. Leibniz*, Vrin, 1986, p. 201-204

²⁹⁵ Chiaradonna had already remarked that Plotinus’ physics seems highly proto-leibnizian, or, likely, Leibniz seems very Platonizing: R. CHIARADONNA, “*Energeia et kinesis chez Plotin et Aristote (Enn. VI 1, [42], 16, 4-19)*”, in M. CRUBELLIER, A. JAULIN, D. LEFEBVRE, P.-M. MOREL (eds.), *Dunamis. Autour de la puissance chez Aristote*, Peeters, 2008, p. 485 n. 33. On Leibniz and Platonism, see: P. SCHRECKER, “Leibniz and the *Timaeus*”, in *The Review of Metaphysics*, 4-4, 1951, p. 495-505; Y. BELAVAL, “Note sur Leibniz et Platon”, in *Revue d’histoire et de philosophie religieuses*, 1, 1975, p. 49-54; Th. LEINKAUF, “Leibniz und Plato”, in *Zeitsprünge. Forschungen zur Frühen Neuzeit*, Bd. 13, 2009, Heft 1/2, p. 23-45 and Ch. MERCER, *Leibniz’s Metaphysics. Its Origins and Development*, Cambridge University Press, 2002, p. 173-252

to be fully grown from the *Essay in Dynamics* (around 1700)²⁹⁶ in which Leibniz describes the *action* as being both the exercise of the *force* over time, and the product of the *formal effect* of motion and the *velocity*²⁹⁷.

Such differentiation between force and action is, of course, present only in a very inchoative way in Proclus. Insofar as the soul contains the *causes* of physical changes²⁹⁸, and deploys its activity over time, albeit his being is eternal, a parallel can be drawn, on the one hand, between *vis* and οὐσία, and, on the other, between *actio* and ἐνέργεια. In this way, the psychic οὐσία can be understood as the dynamic timeless kernel which stretches itself over time by its activity²⁹⁹. In fact, for Leibniz, in the first instance, only the action is estimated as a function of the length travelled by the moving body, while the observable force³⁰⁰ is estimated as a function of the receptivity of the body on which the force acts and of the manifest strength of its influence, but could be estimated by an omniscient mind as the result of the composition of all the individual psychic strengths. That is such individual primitive dynamic power that I overlap with Proclean souls. Thus, in a certain fashion, Leibniz was a Proclus' follower rather than a Plotinus' one, despite the harshness of his judgment about the philosophical ability of the Neoplatonist³⁰¹.

²⁹⁶ G. W. LEIBNIZ, *Essay de dynamique sur les loix du mouvement, ou il est montré, qu'il ne se conserve pas la même quantité de mouvement, mais la même force absolue, ou bien la même quantité de l'action motrice*, GM VI 215-231

²⁹⁷ GM VI 222. According to the demonstration and the notation of the *Dynamica de Potentia et Legibus Naturae Corporeae* (written in 1689-1690, GM VI 281-514), the definitions are as follows (GM VI 425-426):

mass	m
time	t
velocity	v
length travelled	$l = v.t$
formal effect	$f = m.l = m.v.t$
force	$p = m.v^2$
action	$a = f.v = m.l.v = m.v^2.t = p.t$

²⁹⁸ PROCLUS, *In Parm.*, VII 1157.26-28

²⁹⁹ PROCLUS, *In Tim.*, II 131.17-23: οὐκ ἄρα ἐξαρκεῖ τὸ λέγειν γενετήν αὐτὴν τῷ μεριστῶς ἐνεργεῖν, ἀλλ' ὁρᾶν, πῶς καὶ ἐν τῷ εἶναι τοῦτο προϋπάρχει τῆς ψυχῆς· ὁρᾶν, πῶς καὶ ἐν τῷ εἶναι τοῦτο προϋπάρχει τῆς ψυχῆς· **πάντα γὰρ ἐνέργεια κατὰ φύσιν ἔχει τὴν οὐσίαν προλαβοῦσαν τὴν αἰτίαν τῆς ἐνεργείας, ὥστε καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ τῆς κατὰ χρόνον ζωῆς ἐν τῇ οὐσίᾳ προεἰλήφε τὸ σπέρμα πάσης οὐσης ψυχῆς κοινής**· δεῖ γὰρ καὶ γίνεσθαι αὐτήν, οὐκ εἶναι μόνον.

³⁰⁰ viz. the *vis viva/impetus* that is one of the two constituents of the *vis derivativa activa/nisus* (as another part, the *vis mortua/conatus*). *Actio* is estimated, in second instance, as being this *vis viva* deployed over time. The *vis primitiva activa* cannot be estimated in itself, because in the Corporeal World the influence of each *vis primitiva* is limited by the others. This taxonomy is perfectly and clearly explained by Leibniz in the *Specimen Dynamicum pro admirandis Naturae Legibus circa corporum vires et mutuas actiones detegendis et ad suas causas revocandis* (written in 1695, GM VI 234-254), see: GM VI 236-239. On the classification of the dynamic levels in Leibniz, see: A. ROBINET, *Architectonique disjonctive, automates systémiques et idéalité transcendante dans l'Œuvre de G. W. Leibniz*, Vrin, 1986, p. 253-283. Of course, laying aside these Leibnizian subtleties, I argue only that there is a 'family-resemblance' between the psychic οὐσία and the *vis* which should be understood as a *vis primitiva activa*, in other words, I make an ontological comparison.

³⁰¹ G. W. LEIBNIZ, *Specimina Initiis Scientiae generalis addenda*, GP VII 147-148 (piece also called 'Ad constitutionem scientiae generalis: Contemplatio de historia literaria statuque praesenti eruditionis', Akademie-Ausgabe, series 6, vol. 4a, Berlin, 1999, p. 479.4-480.17), *De Primae Philosophiae Emendatione, et de Notione Substantiae*, GP IV 468, *New Essays on Human Understanding*, IV 2 §12 (Akademie-Ausgabe, series 6, vol. 6, Berlin,

How such a parallel with Leibniz' dynamics can to lighten the psychic ἐξαίφνης? Firstly, this parallel highlights the *dynamic* meaning of the psychic 'sudden'. Secondly, that explains in what sense the soul by means of its acts is linked to kinematics. Indeed, to a certain extent, the action which is determined by a time-variable and the length travelled makes the connection of the new science of dynamics with the kinematics – given that the action can be estimated as a function of the force³⁰² as well as a function of the quantity of motion³⁰³ which is soluble into the abstract kinematics of Cartesian Mechanics –, contrary to the force which is independent of time and belongs absolutely to dynamics³⁰⁴.

Someone could object that the activity of the soul takes place in a non-physical time, namely in a higher time proper to the psychic diacosm, in such a way that the activity of the soul does not share anything with the corporeal motions. Such an objection is actually very Plotinian, given that Plotinus strongly distinguishes between a non-quantitative psychic time and the physical time in which occur the motions of bodies³⁰⁵. Proclus, for

1962, p. 371.20-21). In passing, Leibniz – who had read Proclus for the first time towards 1661 under the supervision of Scherzer and Thomasius (first allusions to Proclus in *Letter to Peter Lambeck*, 22th November 1668, Akademie-Ausgabe, series 1, vol. 1, Berlin, 1986, p. 14.3 and *Letter to Antoine Arnauld*, November 1671, Akademie-Ausgabe, series 2, vol. 1, Berlin, 2006, p. 282.29) – had an epistolary exchange with the librarians Mathurin Veyssière la Croze and Jean-Paul Bignon about the Latin manuscripts of the *Tria opuscula* and the *Elements of Theology* in AD 1712: *Letter to Jean-Paul Bignon*, 13th February 1712 (Akademie-Ausgabe, series 1, Transkriptionen 1712, Berlin, forthcoming, p. 78.4-14), 4th June 1712 (*Ibid.* p. 221.11-24), 13th August 1712 (*Ibid.* p. 310.5-25), *Letter to Mathurin Veyssière la Croze* 17th March 1712 (*Ibid.* p. 128.2-14), 30th May 1712 (*Ibid.* p. 210.26-27). Some of these letters are also available in: L. DUTENS (ed.), *Gothofredi Guillelmi Leibnitii. Opera Omnia*, Geneva, 1768, vol. 5, p. 501-503. On Leibniz's appreciation of Greek and Italian Platonisms, especially the Platonism of Marsilio Ficino, see: B. PINCHARD, "Mira et Mystica ou la raison hantée. Leibniz juge de la Renaissance", in D. BERLIOZ, F. NEF (eds.), *L'actualité de Leibniz: les deux labyrinthes. Décade de Cerisy la Salle, 15-22 juin 1995*, Studia Leibnitiana Suppl. 34, Stuttgart, 1999, p. 119-151

³⁰² $a = p.t = m.v^2.t$

³⁰³ $a = m.v.l$

³⁰⁴ In fact, even $m.v^2$ is soluble in non-Cartesian kinematics. For instance, Huygens, who had always forcefully rejected all dynamic consideration, had replaced $m.v$ by $m.v^2$ in his atomist mechanics from 1669: Ch. HUYGENS, *De Motu Corporum ex Percussione*, prop. 11, in *Œuvres complètes*, Martinus Nijhoff, vol. 16, 1929, p. 72-77 (on the edition of this posthumous treatise and the editorial problems of the *Œuvres complètes*, see: J. G. YODER, "Christiaan Huygens' Great Treasure", in *Tractrix*, 3, 1991, p. 1-13, "The archives of Christiaan Huygens and his Editors", I, M. HUNTER (ed.), *Archives of the Scientific Revolution: The Formation and Exchange of Ideas in Seventeenth-Century Europe*, Boydell Press, 1998, p. 91-107, *A Catalogue of the Manuscripts of Christiaan Huygens including a concordance with his Œuvres complètes*, Brill, 2013 and M. G. MORMINO, "Sur quelques problèmes éditoriaux concernant l'œuvre de Christiaan Huygens", in *Revue d'histoire des sciences*, 56-1, 2003, p. 145-151). On Huygens' kinematics, see: A. E. BELL, *Christian Huygens and the Development of Science in the Seventeenth Century*, Edward Arnold & Co, 1947, p. 109-116 and F. CHAREIX, "La découverte des lois du choc par Christiaan Huygens", in *Revue d'histoire des sciences*, 56-1, 2003, p. 15-58. On the influence of Huygens' understanding of $m.v^2$ in the later debates between Leibnizian and Newtonian physicists, see: P. M. HARMAN, "Dynamics and Intelligibility: Bernoulli and MacLaurin", in R. S. WOOLHOUSE (ed.), *Metaphysics and Philosophy of Science in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries. Essays in honour of Gerd Buchdahl*, Kluwer Academic, 1988, p. 213-225

³⁰⁵ R. CHIARADONNA, "Il tempo misura del movimento? Plotino e Aristotele (*Enn.* III 7 [45])", in M. BONAZZI, F. TRABATTONI (eds.), *Platone e la tradizione platonica. Studi di filosofia antica*, Cisalpino, 2003, p. 221-250 and "Energeia et kinesis chez Plotin et Aristotele (*Enn.* VI 1, [42], 16, 4-19)", in M. CRUBELLIER, A. JAULIN, D. LEFEBVRE, P.-M. MOREL (eds.), *Dunamis. Autour de la puissance chez Aristote*, Peeters, 2008, p. 486-487

his part, is very clear on the fact that the time of psychic activity is the same of the one of corporeal motions³⁰⁶. Furthermore, this common time is twofold: souls and bodies are enfolded both by the hypercosmic and the encosmic times³⁰⁷. Thus, as long as the division into the soul between eternal being and temporal activity is genuinely Platonic³⁰⁸, by denying own time for the soul³⁰⁹, Proclus introduces a tension between dynamics and kinematics inside the soul itself. If so, there is also an internal tension in Proclus' understanding of ἐξαίφνης.

Before suggesting a solution for this, that seems useful to sum up the views of Proclus set forth above:

1. Proclus always employs the word ἐξαίφνης with a *kinematic* meaning, namely a *durationless* switch that *imitates* the eternity of some beings. Consequently, Proclus considers such a suddenness as a property of non-sensible items – especially the Forms and the souls –, insofar as they come into the sensible world and leave from the sensible world without any duration.

2. The logical status of the 'sudden' is also transferred to the nature of the soul. The 'sudden' is not only durationless but now outside of time (since it is the *eternal* of the soul, so its *being*), and consequently its function ceases to be *kinematic* to become *dynamic*: as an element of the psychic nature, the 'sudden' is closely linked to the psychic self-motion, especially as the flow of becoming occurs from and around it. However, on the one hand, Proclus' understanding of αὐτοκίνησις *qua* reversion involves a kind of self-passivity, and on the other, αὐτοκίνησις *qua* psychic activity occurs in time and, consequently, can be compared with the physical motions. In other words, Proclus' theory of motion entails that, to some extent, self-motion can be studied by kinematics, in the same way that qualitative and topologic changes are studied by the same theory in Aristotle's physics³¹⁰. Moreover, according to the anti-Plotinian doctrine of the inseparability of the soul from

³⁰⁶ PROCLUS, *In Tim*, III 21.6-24.30, 54.18-55.1, 58.23-59.14, *Elements of Theology*, §198-200

³⁰⁷ PROCLUS, *In Tim*, III 25.11-32.16, 53.6-59.14

³⁰⁸ PLOTINUS, *Enneads*, IV 4 [28], 15-17. Plotinus claims that only the affections and the <corporeal> outputs of the soul (viz. the physical process of the bodies) are enfolded by the physical time. See IV 4 [28], 15.16-17: ἐπεὶ οὐδ' αἱ ψυχὰς ἐν χρόνῳ, ἀλλὰ τὰ πάθη αὐτῶν ἅπτα ἐστὶ καὶ τὰ ποιήματα, and IV 4 [28], 16.4-9: Ἡ ἐν τοῖς ποιουμένοις τὸ πρότερον καὶ παρεληλυθός, ἐν αὐτῇ δὲ οὐδὲν παρεληλυθός, ἀλλὰ πάντες οἱ λόγοι ἅμα, ὥσπερ εἴρηται. Ἐν δὲ τοῖς ποιουμένοις τὸ οὐχ ἅμα, ἐπεὶ οὐδὲ τὸ ὁμοῦ, καίτοι ἐν τοῖς λόγοις τὸ ὁμοῦ, οἷον χεῖρες καὶ πόδες οἱ ἐν λόγῳ· ἐν δὲ τοῖς αἰσθητοῖς χωρὶς. The activity of the soul, for its part, takes place in a more logical 'time' that Plotinus describes with a lot of metaphors in IV 4 [28], 16.9-31.

³⁰⁹ Proclus alludes to a 'psychic time' only in two short passages: PROCLUS, *In Tim*, II 129.6-9, III 25.1. But, in the first, Proclus had surely in mind only the temporal aspect of the soul which permits to distinguish the soul from the higher levels of being; and, in the second, Proclus refutes a concurrent exegesis that links together the 'psychic time' and the Circle of the Other. His rejection of a genuine 'psychic time' is, of course, due to the fact that he closely follows Iamblichus' anti-Plotinian reaction. Contrary to Plotinus who had established the 'primary time' at the level of World-Soul (see: III 7 [45], 11-13), Iamblichus had elevated the 'primary time' from the level of the Soul to that of the Intellect (see: SIMPLICIUS, *In Phys*, 792.20-795.3). Simplicius was perfectly aware that Proclus had just followed Iamblichus (*In Phys*, 795.4-26). This Neoplatonic history is efficiently summarized in: P. DUHEM, *Le Système du Monde. Histoire des doctrines cosmologiques de Platon à Copernic*, Hermann, vol. 1, 1913, p. 246-263 and S. SAMBURSKY, S. PINES (eds.), *The Concept of Time in Late Neoplatonism. Texts with Translation, Introduction and Notes*, Jerusalem, 1971, p. 11-17

³¹⁰ ARISTOTLE, *Phys*, 7.4

its primary ὄχημα³¹¹, which has both figure (σχήμα) and magnitude (μέγεθος)³¹², such a *spiritual* kinematics is directly ‘translated’ into the sensible world by the motions of its congenital vehicle, and therefore becomes susceptible of a geometrical examination³¹³.

The puzzle immediately arises: these two understandings of the ἐξάϊφνης are simply not compatible. Even more, these two conceptions hardly reconcilable are both present in the same writing, namely into *In Parm* (view 1 in IV 844.2-11, view 2 in Proclus’ commentary on the Third Hypothesis), the conflict is just barely dodged by the fact that the kinematic one does not explain the embodiment of the souls but solely the coming of the Forms into the sensible realm. Additionally, the passage of the Sixteenth Dissertation in which Proclus refers to the Third Hypothesis clearly supports the view 1, while the Third Hypothesis should bear the view 2. Admittedly and in spite of the lack of chronological precision, the fact remains that the Sixteenth Dissertation dedicated to the Myth of Er surely was written before *In Parm* (given that Proclus never alludes to *In Parm*, except in the *Platonic Theology*³¹⁴, in such a way that *In Parm* had probably been written around AD 470-475³¹⁵). That is maybe enough for supporting the view according to which Proclus would have modified his interpretation of the ἐξάϊφνης between the two redactions. For instance, while he was commenting on the Third Hypothesis, the exegetical and post-Plotinian pressure which imposes to connect the text with the nature of the soul would have led him for transferring the ‘sudden’ from kinematics to dynamics to link together more closely the αὐτοκίνητον and the ἐξάϊφνης. Indeed, the fact that Proclus alludes very explicitly to a precise passage of the *Parmenides* without mentioning his own teaching on this dialogue should likely be interpreted as the fact that, when he was writing these lines and the Sixteenth Dissertation, he did not still comment the *Parmenides*³¹⁶. But, any

³¹¹ PROCLUS, *Elements of Theology*, §196

³¹² PROCLUS, *Elements of Theology*, §209-210

³¹³ On the doctrine of the vehicle and its link with geometry, see: A. LERNOULD, “Le statut ontologique des objets géométriques dans l’*In Euclidem* de Proclus”, in P. D’HOINE, A. MICHALEWSKI (eds.), *Etudes platoniciennes*, 7, 2011, p. 119-144, “Imagination and Psychic Body: Apparitions of the Divine and Geometric Imagination according to Proclus”, in K. CORRIGAN, T. RASIMUS (eds.), *Gnosticism, Platonism and the Late Ancient World. Essays in Honour of John D. Turner*, Brill, 2013, p. 595-607. For a geometrical illustration of the ‘psychic locomotion’, see: *In Tim*, II 242.24-246.11

³¹⁴ PROCLUS, *Platonic Theology*, I 10 41.7-9, 22-23, I 13 59.2-5, II 10 61.13-18, III 23 83.6-10, VI 24 110.13-15, 113.4-6, 114.19-22. See: C. LUNA, A.-Ph. SEGONDS (eds.), *Proclus. Commentaire sur le Parménide de Platon*, vol. 1, Les Belles Lettres, 2007, p. xxxii-xxxiv

³¹⁵ See: C. LUNA, A.-Ph. SEGONDS (eds.), *Proclus. Commentaire sur le Parménide de Platon*, vol. 1, Les Belles Lettres, 2007, p. xiv-xix

³¹⁶ The only sure fact is that the Sixteenth Dissertation had been written after *In Tim*, since Proclus refers twice to *In Tim* (*In Remp*, II 220.9-11, 335.19-20). Following Marinus’ testimony (MARINUS, *Life of Proclus*, 13.14-17), Proclus would have written a first version of *In Tim* at the age of twenty-seven, so in AD 439 (H. D. SAFFREY, A.-Ph. SEGONDS, C. LUNA (eds.), *Marinus. Proclus ou sur le bonheur*, Les Belles Lettres, 2001, p. 16 n.12). *In Tim* is itself anterior to *In Parm* (given that *In Parm* refers many times to *In Tim*: *In Parm*, III 802.2-5, 812.21-27, 819.30-31, IV 925.9-20, VII 1235.29-36, and C. LUNA, A.-Ph. SEGONDS (eds.), *Proclus. Commentaire sur le Parménide de Platon*, vol. 1, Les Belles Lettres, 2007, p. xx-xxiii). Therefore, the Sixteenth Dissertation should be written between AD 439 and 470. That is, of course, a very extended period. To reduce it, that is possible to follow Lambertson who has suggested that the Athenian School had got away from the Iamblichean curriculum of Platonic dialogues that every Platonic scholar should follow, notably by introducing the commentary of the Myth of Er, see: R. LAMBERTSON (ed.), *Proclus the Successor on Poetics and the Homeric Poems. Essays 5 and 6 of His Commentary on the Republic of Plato*, Society of Biblical Literature, 2012, p. xv (on the Iamblichean curriculum, see: *Anonymous Prolegomena to Platonic Philosophy*, 26.13-44, M. DUNN, “Iamblichus, Thrasyllus, and the Reading Order of the Platonic Dialogues”, in

chronological consideration, whatever its subtlety, is not enough for deducing by itself a doctrinal evolution. It is highly preferable not to resort to such an expedient, and to try, as far as possible, to dissolve the supposed incompatibility by finding a mean of harmonizing the two views.

Another very deflationist – but also unsatisfying – solution would consist in sur-interpreting the lexical substitution of ἐξαίφνης in IV 844.6 by τῷ νῦν in IV 873.24 as the fact that Proclus had two concepts of ἐξαίφνης, namely the physical/kinematic and the psychic/dynamic. But, as I have argued, Proclus was both too Aristotelian and too Iamblichean for strongly separating the two realms, as the orthodox Platonisms did.

I argue that the best way to reconcile these two meanings of ἐξαίφνης is as follows: beyond the exegetical temptation to close together the ἐξαίφνης and the nature of the soul, Proclus considers that the logical neutrality of the ‘sudden’ and the fact that it is durationless can explain that, beyond the variety of the psychic acts occurring in time, the οὐσία of the soul remains the one and the same. Indeed, in the course of its activities, the eternal being of the soul is not present for a limited period but always, as if the being of the soul appears always ‘suddenly’ through the psychic activity³¹⁷. For instance, if the activity of the soul as *thinking* corresponds to a ‘linear locomotion’ from a theorem to another³¹⁸, then claiming that the soul remains one and the same in its being at each step

R. BAINE HARRIS (ed.), *The Significance of Neoplatonism*, SUNY Press, 1976, p. 59-80; A.-J. FESTUGIÈRE, “L’ordre de lecture des dialogues de Platon aux V-VI^e siècles”, *Museum Helveticum*, 26, 1969, p. 281-296; P. GOLITSIS, *Les Commentaires de Simplicius et Philopon d’Aristote. Tradition et innovation*, de Gruyter, 2008, p. 14-15 and L. G. WESTERINK, J. TROUILLARD, A.-Ph. SEGONDS (eds.), *Prolégomènes à la philosophie de Platon*, Les Belles Lettres, 1990, p. lxxvii-lxxiii). If so, the lessons on the eschatological myth certainly would take place into the ‘theological’ step of the curriculum, namely between the lessons on *Phaedrus-Symposium* (*Anonym. Proleg.*, 26.32-33) and the lesson on the *Philebus* (*Anonym. Proleg.*, 26.21-23). But his argument for claiming that the *Republic* was scholastically taught in Proclus’ circle is only based on the fact that the Sixteenth essay consists of a sentence-by-sentence exegesis, contrary to the others. That is surely not enough to assert that Syrianus or Proclus had deviated from the Iamblichean model by including the study of the Myth of Er. Indeed, this section of the *Republic* had a long exegetical history, and Neoplatonic libraries held a lot of Middle-Platonist commentaries on it (a possible list: Derkyllides, Gaius, Albinus, Maximus of Nicea, Harpocration, Euclides, Clemens, Cronius, Taurus), in such a way that, more modestly, Proclus might have just in mind, beyond the inherent interests of Plato’s text, to continue the tradition, or to challenge the previous readings in the course of the always unsatisfied quenching of his thirst for Platonic knowledge. So, the only subsistence of an extended commentary of the Myth of Er is not enough to put us in mind that Proclus had perpetrated a kind of modification of the schedule in the course of his teaching. Moreover, a passage of the *In Alc* seems to indicate that Proclus scrupulously had followed Iamblichean curriculum (*In Alc*, 11.14-21). I think the mean objection against Lambertson’s conjecture remains the fact that the Iamblichean curriculum is only focused on the Platonic *dialogues*, whereas Proclus considers that it is not strictly speaking the literary form of the *Republic* and of the *Laws* (*Anonym. Proleg.*, 26.5-9), in such a way that incorporating the *Republic* in the Iamblichean *canon* of Plato’s dialogues is just meaningless. Nevertheless, Proclus had surely taught the Myth of Er to his pupils, by virtue of its Platonic importance, but the form of such a teaching would have oscillated between very various ways. Thus, the weak accuracy of the chronology seems to be unavoidable.

³¹⁷ As Proclus would have said according to DAMASCIUS, *In Parm.*, 262.12-13, 17-18 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 29.5-6, 12-14) : καὶ πῶς πανταχοῦ κατ’ αὐτὸν ἐνεργεῖ ἡ ψυχὴ; ... Πρὸς δὲ τὸ πρότερον, ὅτι πανταχοῦ ἡ αὐτὴ οὐσία πάρεστιν αἰώνιος οὐσα καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἐσχάτοις

³¹⁸ PROCLUS, *In Parm.*, VII 1157.2-28 in which Proclus said that thinking is a ‘psychic locomotion’, and *In Tim.*, II, 243.17-28 in which he said that this ‘psychic locomotion’ is like a geometric line (of course, an unextended one, see: *In Tim.*, II 245.14-23). On the *spiritual* kinematics, see also: *In Tim.*, II 124.17-19, 129.5-9 and J. OPSOMER, “The

of the process must mean that the soul is essentially neither identical to the departure theorem nor the arrival one, and that the soul is able to be both the one and the other, albeit successively. That way, the being of the soul can be said, firstly, anterior to these theorems (ἢ ὡς πρὸ ἀμφοῖν³¹⁹), in such a way that the soul appears to comprehend the whole of both (πάλιν ἀμφοτέρω δοκοῦσαν περιέχειν³²⁰), and, secondly, not receiving their nature into its being (οὐκ ἐπιδεχομένην τὸν τῶν ἄκρων λόγον³²¹) but only in its self-‘generated’ acts which occur from and around its unchangeable οὐσία-ὑπαρξίς (ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ γοῦν καὶ περὶ αὐτοῦ ἡ γένεσις³²²). Such a position involves that what appears at each step of the thinking-process is what is logically neutral in the soul, namely its being. And it appears in each period of the process, as small as this period is, in such a way that the duration of its coming must be smaller than any duration that can be given. Such an infinitesimal, smaller than any duration that can be assigned, can be said durationless. Precisely, this is what the ἐξαίφνης is³²³. Thus, on the one hand, the logical features of the soul and of the ‘sudden’ are highly similar, and, on the other, the coming of the being of the soul in each of its acts should be durationless, in such a way that the ‘sudden’ wonderfully expresses the co-presence of the being of the soul with its activity throughout it, as varied as this activity is. In this way, the ἐξαίφνης keeps its kinematic meaning without losing all traces of dynamic overtone. Moreover, the suddenness of the self-coming of the soul *imitates* its eternity, in the same way that the sudden coming of the Forms into the sensible world imitates their eternal beings³²⁴. There is a great difference however. Indeed, the Forms have neither the same logical feature of the ‘sudden’, nor a similar natural ‘weirdness’. That is why the being of the soul is alone of which Proclus said that its eternal *is* the ‘sudden’, because the soul shares much more with the ἐξαίφνης than the Forms. Hence such a denomination appears to be a metonymy rather than an identification.

At any rate, all this explanation of Proclus’ understanding of the ‘suddenness’ of the soul is compatible with Damascius’ laconic evidence:

In Parm, 262.14-17³²⁵: Πῶς δὲ τὸ ἐξαίφνης ὁράται καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἐνεργείαις, εἰ μὴ ἐστὶν ἡ οὐσία κατ’ αὐτὸν αἰώνιος; ἢ πρὸς μὲν τοῦτο εἴποι τις ἂν ὅτι εἰδῶλον τοῦτο ἐκείνου εἰς τὰς <ιστάς> ἐνεργείας πρόεισιν ἀπὸ τοῦ αἰωνίου· καὶ γὰρ ἐν τοῖς σώμασι τὸ νῦν εἰδῶλον αἰῶνος.

How can the sudden also be in the activities, if, according to Proclus, only the being of the soul is eternal? To that, we can answer that the sudden proceeds in the activities from the eternal, as its image; indeed, in the bodies also the now is an image of eternity.

According to Damascius, Proclus would have distinguished between the psychic ἐξαίφνης and the physical νῦν. But the case of the coming of the Forms into the sensible world shows that he was not very rigorous with such a distinction. More probably, here, that is just a clarification: inasmuch as the ἐξαίφνης – used as a substantive and not as an

Integration of Aristotelian Physics in a Neoplatonic Context: Proclus on Movers and Divisibility”, in R. CHIARADONNA, F. TRABATTONI (eds.), *Physics and Philosophy of Nature in Greek Neoplatonism*, Brill, 2009, p. 227-228.

³¹⁹ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm*, 262.10 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 29.4)

³²⁰ PROCLUS, *In Tim*, III 215.20-21

³²¹ PROCLUS, *In Tim*, III 215.20

³²² DAMASCIUS, *In Parm*, 262.10-11 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 29.4-5)

³²³ In this way, Proclus’ conception of the ‘sudden’ would be in agreement with Cherniss who interprets the ἐξαίφνης as a kind of infinitesimal: H. F. CHERNISS, “Parmenides and the *Parmenides* of Plato”, in *The American Journal of Philology*, 53-2, 1932, p. 132 n. 25. Maybe, here, Proclus might be under the influence of Aristotle’s brief definition of the adverb ‘suddenly’, see: ARISTOTLE, *Phys*, 4.13 222b15-222b26

³²⁴ PROCLUS, *In Parm*, VI 844.10-12, 873.24-25

³²⁵ = W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 29.8-12

adverb – is understood as ‘what is coming suddenly’, the ‘sudden’ has the same relation of μίμησις with ‘what is eternal <in the soul>’ than the ‘now’ has with the ‘eternity’.

$$\frac{\text{what is coming suddenly}}{\text{what is eternal}} = \frac{\text{now}}{\text{eternity}}$$

This conception is *in fine* just a variation on *Timaeus*, 37d5-7 in which Plato defines time as the moving likeness of eternity.

To conclude, Proclus reconciles the two meanings of ἐξαίφνης, namely the *terminus technicus* and the *terminus mysticus* in a novel fashion. On the one hand, the suddenness of the coming is kept for the superior entities of its unbelievable theology, in such a way that the ‘sudden’ retains an irreducible mystical overtone³²⁶. On the other, despite a confusion – very little Platonic – between kinematics’ and dynamics’ realms which happens in the Psychic and Natural diacosms, the ‘sudden’ is rather a kinematic stuff, than a dynamic one, in such a way that the very meaning of the Third Hypothesis is not completely lost. The fact that the exegesis of the Third Hypothesis as focused on the nature of the soul does not entail a transfer of the ‘sudden’ from kinematics to dynamics must ultimately be explained, beyond the psychic blend of kinematics and dynamics, by the fact that Proclus distinguishes the temporal activity of the soul from its eternal being, and so must justify the co-presence of the soul with itself in the course of its activities. Such a requirement is specific to Syrianus’ students – as Hermias³²⁷ and Proclus –, by virtue of their rejection of any substantial change for the soul that entails a very peculiar understanding of αὐτοκίνησις. Therefore, his understanding of the ἐξαίφνης cannot be extended to his predecessors – as Iamblichus and Hierocles of Alexandria – or to his successors – as Simplicius/Priscianus and Damascius –, inasmuch as they sustain the reverse Iamblichean thesis of the changing being of the souls³²⁸.

3.2.2. Damascius and the Dynamic ἐξαίφνης

Albeit Damascius has dedicated almost all his commentary on the Third Hypothesis to the nature of the ‘sudden’³²⁹, the word ἐξαίφνης rarely appears in his other works. Furthermore, Damascius always uses it as an adverb with a high mystical tone (sometimes with an obvious reference to the *Seventh Letter*), for instance: the sudden lighting of intelligible truth (i.e. the intellection of the Forms that necessarily occurs miraculously and suddenly by virtue of the limitation and the helplessness of the discursive investigation)³³⁰, the suddenness of the activity of some Intelligible-Intellective Gods³³¹

³²⁶ By the way, such a mystical overtone is highly corroborated by the *Life of Proclus* in which Marinus uses the word ἐξαίφνης for the miraculous recoveries caused by Proclus (those of Telesphorus in §7 and Asklepigenia in §29). See also: §30 and §32

³²⁷ HERMIAS, *In Phaedr.*, 122.7-10. See: I. HADOT (ed.), *Simplicius. Commentaire sur le Manuel d’Epictète*, Brill, 1996, p. 107

³²⁸ On this point, see: C. STEEL, *The Changing Self. A Study on the Soul in Later Neoplatonism: Iamblichus, Damascius and Priscianus*, Brussel, 1978, especially p. 52-69 (Iamblichus), p. 93-119 (Damascius), p. 142-154 (Priscianus). For Hierocles, see: I. HADOT (ed.), *Simplicius. Commentaire sur le Manuel d’Epictète*, Brill, 1996, p. 83-107. See also, for the earlier Augustine: AUGUSTINE, *De immortalitate animae*, 6.12, *Contra Secundinum*, §15, *De musica*, VI 11.33, 13.40

³²⁹ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm.*, 246.1-273.11 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 1.1-50.4)

³³⁰ DAMASCIUS, *De Princ.*, I 54.14-18 (= W&C, vol. 1, 1986, p. 82.3-9), 305.3-14 (= W&C, vol. 3, 1991, p. 141.3-19). On the limitation of the discursive thought in Damascius, see: C. METRY-TRESSON, *L’aporie ou l’expérience des limites de la pensée dans le Péri Archôn de Damaskios*, Brill, 2012

³³¹ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm.*, 95.12-15 (= W&C, vol. 2, 1997, p. 47.5-10)

(namely the Iynges of the *Chaldean Oracles*³³² who correspond to the supracelestial place of *Phaedrus*, 243c3, at least since the exegesis of Proclus³³³). Damascius also follows Proclus on the suddenness of the coming of the Forms into the sensible world (after a durative overcoming of the material barriers that could prevent its reception), but, additionally, he compares such a suddenness to a magic trick³³⁴. Moreover, in the *Vita Isidori*, ἐξαίφνης is often employed for marking the surprise or the mysterious way by means of which an event happens³³⁵. In all these occurrences, Damascius has a kinematic understanding of the ‘sudden’ as a durationless switch. But, when he employs the word ἐξαίφνης as a substantive and not as an adverb in his commentary on the Third Hypothesis, the meaning of the ‘sudden’ changes radically.

In relation to Proclus, Damascius makes at once a return to Iamblichus and a return to Platonic orthodoxy: on the one hand, along Iamblichus, he maintains that the essence of the soul is neither outside of time nor immutable but, on the contrary, that the soul is subject to substantial change in the course of its procession and conversion³³⁶; on the other hand, it reacts against the Proclean kinetics by drawing a strong opposition between entities belonging to dynamics and those belonging to kinematics, taking Plato’s and Plotinus’ kinetics up again.

Indeed, Damascius supports the heavy lines of Platonic dynamics in his ‘archaeology’, namely the distinction between intellective immobility (τὸ ἀκίνητον), the causative process of psychic self-mover (τὸ αὐτοκίνητον)³³⁷, and the sensible and extended process of the other-moved (τὸ ἑτεροκίνητον)³³⁸, that is to say the ‘classic’ Neoplatonic scheme that Proclus had already supported in his *Elements of Theology*³³⁹. However, Damascius introduces several degrees of self-motion in accordance with the variety of the degree of separability from the body (under the influence of *Phys*, 8.5), in such a way that, for him, the irrational soul is only an ‘apparent self-mover’ while the rational soul is a ‘real self-mover’³⁴⁰. In other words, the irrational soul is the *formal* cause of physical motions (by virtue of the ἐμψυχία, viz. the transmission of being alive³⁴¹) while the rational is their

³³² On the Iynges, see: H. LEWY, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy. Mystic Magic and Platonism in the Later Roman Empire*, Le Caire, 1956, p. 449-251 and R. MAJERCIK (ed.), *The Chaldean Oracles. Text, Translation, and Commentary*, Brill, 1989, p. 9-10

³³³ H. LEWY, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy. Mystic Magic and Platonism in the Later Roman Empire*, Le Caire, 1956, p. 481-485

³³⁴ DAMASCIUS, *In Phil*, 135.1-136.4

³³⁵ DAMASCIUS, *Vita Isidori*, in PHOTIUS, *Bibliotheca*, cod. 242, 116.5 and 203.8

³³⁶ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm*, 252.6-257.2 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 11.20-19.21). On this Iamblichean point in Damascius and his followers, see: C. STEEL, *The Changing Self. A Study on the Soul in Later Neoplatonism: Iamblichus, Damascius and Priscianus*, Brussel, 1978, p. 90-116 and I. HADOT (ed.), *Simplicius. Commentaire sur le Manuel d’Épictète*, Brill, 1996, p. 70-113

³³⁷ On the identity of mover and moved into the self-mover, see: DAMASCIUS, *In Parm*, 263.8-10 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 30.22-26)

³³⁸ DAMASCIUS, *De Princ*, I 29.25-37.2, 261.15-267.8 (= W&C, vol. 1, 1986, p. 42.9-53.28; vol. 3, 1991, p. 70.1-78.24)

³³⁹ PROCLUS, *Elements of Theology*, §14, §20

³⁴⁰ DAMASCIUS, *De Princ*, I 28.25-35.6 (= W&C, vol. 1, 1986, p. 42.9-51.14). See: I. HADOT, *Le problème du néoplatonisme alexandrin: Hiérocès et Simplicius*, Etudes Augustiniennes, 1978, p. 174-181

³⁴¹ DAMASCIUS, *De Princ*, I 32.23-33.16 (= W&C, vol. 1, 1986, p. 47.20-49.4), *In Phaed*, I, §177, 1 and II, §2, 17-18 (=L. G. WESTERINK (ed.), *The Greek Commentaries on Plato’s Phaedo. Vol. II Damascius*, North-Holland Publishing Company, 1977, p. 106-107; p. 288-289). On the ἐμψυχία in Proclus, see: *In Tim*, III 285.3, 287.10, 324.29, *In Remp*, II 90.11-14

efficient cause³⁴². To some extent, such a division appears to cross-check the Proclean distinction between the soul (self-mover and self-moved) and the enmattered entities (mover and moved)³⁴³. But by conflating the two kinds of self-motion and the twofold causality, Damascius seems to escape the confusion between kinematics and dynamics, inasmuch as, strictly speaking, the formal causation is not a genuine *motive force* acting upon an item, therefore, does not involve a *dynamic* causation. Anyway, an ‘apparent self-mover’ is *in fine* just a moved item of which the active-mover seems to be internal, while the ‘apparent other-moved’ seems to have an external mover³⁴⁴, but they actually belong together to the set of the ‘real other-moved’ of which kinematics studies the extended and quantifiable motions.

Damascius favours the model of alteration for understanding the self-motion of the soul, to the detriment of the model of locomotion. Conceiving the genuine self-motion as a self-alteration (or self-modification)³⁴⁵ provides at least two benefits: first, to a certain extent, this model is less physical and more chemical, in such a way that it takes better the fact that the soul results from a mixture³⁴⁶ into account; and, second, such a model allows him to put aside the influence of the kinematic reasoning of Aristotle’s *Phys*, 8.5 in which the locomotion looks like a paradigm for all kinds of motions. In doing so, Damascius distances himself from Proclus who had a tendency to understand self-motion as a self-locomotion (albeit, strictly speaking, Proclus had sustained that the soul experiences both locomotion and alteration in the course of its self-motion, of course in a spiritual fashion³⁴⁷).

³⁴² On the distinction between the efficient (ὁφ’ οὐ/ποιητική that must be understood in an Empedoclean way rather than in an Aristotelian one) and the formal (καθ’ ὁρίστική) causes that goes back to the teaching of Porphyry, see: SIMPLICIUS, *In Phys*, 10.35-11.3 and PROCLUS, *Platonic Theology*, II 9. Understanding the soul as the formal cause of the ‘being alive’ for bodies can, of course, be found in Simplicius/Priscianus of Lydia: (Ps.-) SIMPLICIUS, *In DA*, 4.12-20 (on this passage, see: I. HADOT, *Le problème du néoplatonisme alexandrine: Hiéroclès et Simplicius*, Etudes Augustiniennes, 1978, p. 197-198, n. 23), 51.28-52.10, 56.35-59.14, 87.9-35 (in which Priscianus distinguishes between a transcendent part of the soul that is the efficient cause of physical motions, and the soul *qua* entelexy which is their formal cause), 301.30-304.7, etc. On the disputation about the authorship of the commentary on Aristotle’s *De Anima* that goes back at least to Francesco Piccolomini (*Francisci Piccolomini Senensis commentarii in libros Aristotelis De coelo, ortu et interitu; adiuncta lucidissima expositione, in tres libros eiusdem de anima, nunc recens in lucem prodeunt, Moguntia*, 1608, p. 1001f), see: F. BOSSIER, C. STEEL, “Priscianus Lydus en de ‘In De Anima’ van Pseudo (?)-Simplicius”, in *Tijdschrift voor filosofie*, 34, 1972, p. 761-822; J. O. URMSOON, P. LAUTNER (eds.), *Simplicius. On Aristotle, On the Soul 1.1-2.4*, Bloomsbury, 1995, p. 2-4; I. HADOT, “Simplicius or Priscianus? On the Author of the Commentary on Aristotle’s ‘De Anima’ (CAG XI): A Methodological Study”, in *Mnemosyne*, 55-2, 2002, p. 159-199 and M. PERKAMS, “Priscian of Lydia, commentator on the *De Anima* in the Tradition of Iamblichus”, in *Mnemosyne*, 58-4, 2005, p. 510-530, etc.

³⁴³ PROCLUS, *Platonic Theology*, I 14

³⁴⁴ DAMASCIUS, *De Princ*, I 33.16-35.6 (= W&C, vol. 1, 1986, p. 49.5-51.14). On the difference between the ‘apparent’ and the ‘real’ for the self-movers and immobiles, see also: *De Princ*, I 262.23-266.17 (= W&C, vol. 3, 1991, p. 72.3-77.18)

³⁴⁵ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm*, 253.19-21, 254.24-25, 255.11-13, 15-16, 23-30, 270.19-271.272.3, 272.18-22 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 14.7-10, 16.7-8, 17.8-10, 13-15, 18.2-8, 45.1-47.14, 48.12-18)

³⁴⁶ PLATO, *Timaeus*, 35a-37c, 41e-42a. According to Aristotle’s *GC* I 10 & II 7, the mixture results from the mutual alteration of the components.

³⁴⁷ PROCLUS, *In Parm*, VII 1157.2-28

In Parm., 253.19-21³⁴⁸: Τί οὖν κωλύει, πῶς δὲ οὐκ ἀναγκαῖον καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν τὴν ἡμετέραν, ἀλλοιοῦσάν τε καὶ ἀλλοιούμενην ἑαυτὴν καὶ ὑφ' ἑαυτῆς οὕτως, ἄνω τε καὶ κάτω μεθίστασθαι;

What, then, is preventing or, rather, how is it not necessary that our soul, both modifying and modified itself and by itself, also moves up and down?

The self-alteration consists for the soul to modify the quality of its essence (τοιόνδε τῆς οὐσίας), namely its essential participation (οὐσιώδης μέθεξις)³⁴⁹, especially on the occasion of its ascent or of its descent throughout the scale of being. Modifying its own essence, the soul is said self-moved (αὐτοκίνητον), self-changed (αὐτομετάβλητον) and self-generated (αὐτογένητον) at once³⁵⁰. Here, perhaps, Damascius' terminology is linked to a late Dionysian classification of motions that might go back to a Neoplatonic teaching³⁵¹. This classification, entailing a threefold subdivision of qualitative change into alteration (ἀλλοίωσις), otheration (ἐτεροίωσις) and transformation (τροπή)³⁵², maintains that alteration is characterized by the fact that, unlike transformation, a kind of substantial permanence is involved³⁵³. In agreement with such a distinction, for Damascius, there

³⁴⁸ = W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 14.7-10

³⁴⁹ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm.*, 254.20-257.2 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 16.21-19.21)

³⁵⁰ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm.*, 263.12-14, 265.12-18 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 30.27-31.4, 34.12-14)

³⁵¹ Some scholars have tried to support the identification of Ps.-Dionysius with Damascius, see: C. M. MAZZUCCHI, "Damascio, autore del *Corpus Dionysiacum*, e il dialogo *Περὶ πολιτικῆς ἐπιστήμης*", in *Aevum*, 80-2, 2006, p. 299-334. Mazzucchi's reasoning has been dismissed in: E. FIORI, "Review of Mazzucchi", in *Adamantius*, 14, 2008, p. 670-673. On the authorship of the *Corpus Dionysiacum*, see: R. F. HATHAWAY, *Hierarchy and the Definition of Order in the Letters of Pseudo-Dionysius. A Study in the Form and Meaning of the Pseudo-Dionysian Writings*, Martinus Nijhoff, 1969, p. 3-31 (p. 30, Hathaway reports that A. Kojève shares his own conviction that Damascius was the author of, at least, some Dionysian Letters). Anyway, the only assured fact is that Ps.-Dionysius is very influenced by Proclus and Damascius from whom he sometimes borrows extended quotations. On Damascius and Ps.-Dionysius, see also: S. LILLA, "Pseudo-Denys l'Aréopagite, Porphyre et Damascius", in Y. DE ANDIA (ed.), *Denys l'Aréopagite et sa postérité en Orient et en Occident*, Institut d'Etudes Augustiniennes, 1997, p. 135-152. On the 'crypto-pagan hypothesis' for explaining the *Corpus Areopagiticum*, see: T. LANKILA, "The *Corpus Areopagiticum* as a Crypto-Pagan Project", in *Journal of Late Antique Religion and Culture*, 5, 2011, p. 14-40

³⁵² Ps.-DIONYSIUS THE AREOPAGITE, *Div. Nom.* IX 6.9; MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR, *Scholia in librum De Divinis Nominibus*, PG 3, col. 381a-d; BASIL OF CAESAREA ('the Minor'), *In Gregorii Nazianzeni orationem 38* (in *Parisianus Coisl.* 240, f. 9v-10r and *Parisianus Graecus* 573, f. 8v-9r); CALLISTUS ANGELICUDES, *Refutatio Thomae Aquinae*, in S. G. PAPADOPOULOS (ed.), *Καλλίστου Ἀγγελικουδῆ κατὰ Θωμᾶ Ἀκινάτου*, Athens, 1970, p. 103.1-10, p. 187.13-22 and SIMPLICIUS, *In Phys.*, 691.23-693.2. See also for the Islamic reception of this classification (notably in a treatise of 'Abdallah ibn al-Faḍl al-Anṭākī): M. RASHED, "La classification des lignes simples selon Proclus et sa transmission au monde islamique", in C. D'ANCONA, G. SERRA (eds.), *Aristotele e Alessandro di Afrodisia nella tradizione araba. Atti del colloquio 'La ricezione arabe ed ebraica della filosofia e della scienza greche' (Padova, 14-15 maggio 1999)*, Padoue, 2002, p. 257-279

³⁵³ Maximus the Confessor, commenting Ps.-Dionysius, rambles on the distinction between alteration and transformation by quoting Aristotle's *GC* I 4 319b10-18 and introducing into the quotation the word τροπή next to the Aristotelian words γένεσις and φθορά. The distinction between ἀλλοίωσις and ἐτεροίωσις constitutes a gloss on *Phys.* 4.9 217b24-27 (the ἐτεροίωσις of 217b26 is a hapax in Aristotle). To a certain extent, the distinction between τροπή and ἀλλοίωσις can be found in: PROCLUS, *Elements of Theology*, §27, (Ps.-)SIMPLICIUS, *In DA.*, 19.1-3, 169.31-36, and J. PHILOPONUS, *De aeternitate mundi contra Proclum*, 137.18-21, 203.20-25, 396.3-8, 415.11-15, 421.10-15, *In DA.*, 441.6-11, etc. The three-way split between τροπή, ἀλλοίωσις and ἐτεροίωσις can also be found in: THEON OF

always remains something into the soul that is not subject to modification through the journey of the soul from the summit to the lower levels of being³⁵⁴. Actually, that is a genuine property of the self-motion that the self-mover keep its own identity throughout its odyssey³⁵⁵. This psychic invariant is the psychic kernel that Damascius calls εἶδος τῆς ὑπάρξεως (by contrast with its changing εἶδος τῆς οὐσιώδους μεθέξεως)³⁵⁶, or τὸ προαιρετικόν ('the faculty of decision')³⁵⁷, or τὸ προσεκτικόν ('the faculty of awareness')³⁵⁸, and also, sometimes, ὑποκείμενον³⁵⁹. Albeit Damascius employs elsewhere the expression τῆς ψυχικῆς τροπῆς³⁶⁰, that would surely be – as Van Riel has suggested³⁶¹ – a cutting remark against the Proclean thesis of the soul *qua* ἄτρεπτον³⁶² rather than the sign of a deep evolution of his thought. At any rate, in his commentary on the Third Hypothesis, Damascius only draws a parallel between self-motion and ἀλλοίωσις. More precisely, the psychic self-modification is conceived on the Aristotelian model of the sensory alteration³⁶³, especially on the model of the sight, which implies, on the one hand, that the perceptive faculty keeps its numerical identity and, on the other, its modification through the change of the perceived objects³⁶⁴. By the way, the rejection of the psychic τροπή in favour of the psychic ἀλλοίωσις constitutes the central theme of the five conundrums that close his commentary on the Third Hypothesis³⁶⁵.

The law of the essential participation-modification is as follows: the more the soul is illuminated by the divine light radiating from the higher levels of being, the more the soul is unified, concentrated, and *dynamically* powerful. Conversely, the more the soul moves away from this divine light, the more it is darkened, plural and scattered, hence the loss of its self-motive effectiveness³⁶⁶. Thus, the law of the substantial modification of the soul is directly linked to a law of dynamics, given that the variable dynamic strength of the soul is proportional to its variable illumination (ἐλλαμνις) that should be understood as its

SMYRNA, *Mathematics Useful for Understanding Plato*, III, §22 (= J. DUPUIS (ed.), Hachette, 1892, p. 244-245; = J. DUPUIS, R. & D. LAWLOR (eds.), Wizards Bookshelf, 1979, p. 98) and SEXTUS EMPIRICUS, *AM*, 8.456

³⁵⁴ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm*, 271.3-21 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 45.21-46.22)

³⁵⁵ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm*, 254.1-4 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 14.20-23)

³⁵⁶ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm*, 271.28-29 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 47.6-7)

³⁵⁷ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm*, 256.6-7 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 18.15-17)

³⁵⁸ DAMASCIUS, *In Phaed*, I §269, §271, II §19, §21. On this point, see: S. AHBEL-RAPPE (ed.), *Damascius. Problems and Solutions Concerning First Principles*, Oxford University Press, 2010, p. 29-34; "Damascius on the Third Hypothesis of the *Parmenides*", in J. D. TURNER, K. CORRIGAN (eds.), *Plato's Parmenides and its heritage, vol. 2: Its Reception in Neoplatonic, Jewish and Christian Texts*, Society of Biblical Literature, 2010, p. 148-156 (especially, p. 153-154)

³⁵⁹ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm*, 249.21-24 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 7.15-19)

³⁶⁰ DAMASCIUS, *In Phil*, 126.8-9 (see also: *In Phaed*, I §71.4, §276.1). Some editors, as Westerink (following the example of the editors of Plotinus, namely Henry-Schwyzler), had replaced τροπῆς by ῥοπῆς. On this point, see: G. VAN RIEL (ed.), *Damascius. Commentaire sur le Philèbe de Platon*, Les Belles Lettres, 2008, p. 39, n.6 (p. 133)

³⁶¹ G. VAN RIEL (ed.), *Damascius. Commentaire sur le Philèbe de Platon*, Les Belles Lettres, 2008, p. 39, n. 6 (p. 133)

³⁶² PROCLUS, *Platonic Theology*, I 19 92.5-16

³⁶³ ARISTOTLE, *DA*, II 5 417b2-27

³⁶⁴ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm*, 255.11-15, 269.27-270.2 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 17.8-13, 43.16-22)

³⁶⁵ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm*, 268.20-273.11 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 41.1-50.4). On this point, see: C. STEEL, *The Changing Self. A Study on the Soul in Later Neoplatonism: Iamblichus, Damascius and Priscianus*, Brussel, 1978, p. 102-116

³⁶⁶ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm*, 256.6-17, 270.6-19 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 18.18-19.6, 44.7-25)

distance from the Intellect³⁶⁷ (in the same way as the moon is variably altered and illuminated according to its variable distance from the sun³⁶⁸). By the way, the fall of the soul into the sensible world entails the differentiation of the essential participation into several kinds, which correspond to the various psychic faculties-forms acquired by the soul in the course of its degradation and as soon as the bodily influence grows: intellective modification, dianoetic modification, doxastic and sensitive modification³⁶⁹. The loss of Damascius' commentaries on the Myth of Er, on the Decree of Adrastea, or on the end of the *Timaeus* is highly regrettable, because his heterodox and Iamblichean thesis according to which the being of the soul is changeable and his law of essential modification have very interesting ethical consequences, and have surely profoundly revised the details of the understanding of the Platonic eschatological belief of cyclical reincarnation, therefore of the Neoplatonic Theodicy³⁷⁰.

However, it must be remarked that self-motion is not always vertical, but can be horizontal, for instance when the soul first thinks of one intelligible form and then another, the modification of its essence does not always progress from the worst to the best, or vice versa³⁷¹. Thus, in the course of his process of thinking, the soul alters itself in agreement with the distinctive features of the thought form without modifying its own dignity, namely its degree of unity³⁷².

Regarding the logical status of the soul, which is a mixture and an intermediary item onto the scale of beings, Damascius says that its logical status is to be neither celestial nor terrestrial, *and* both celestial and terrestrial³⁷³, and in the same way for all predicates to be neither A nor $\neg A$, *and* both A and $\neg A$ ³⁷⁴. Thus, in a sense, for Damascius, the soul 'puts away' or 'destroys-and-preserves' both the contrary states in a very 'proto-Hegelian' fashion³⁷⁵.

More precisely, the soul has in itself at once the affirmative and negative predicates such as they are possessed by the divine inhabitants of the Intelligible realm, namely in a paradigmatic way that involves their anteriority from the flowing encosmic time, while the negations involved by the 'sudden' seem to be only effective into the γένεσις-realm, so for the sensible and temporal entities:

³⁶⁷ On the other meanings of ἑλλάμμις in Damascius, see: DAMASCIUS, *De Princ.* I 256.18-261.14 (= W&C, vol. 3, 1991, p. 62.14-69.22)

³⁶⁸ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm.* 270.19-27 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 45.1-12). On the heavenly bodies and their substantial changes, see: C. STEEL, *The Changing Self. A Study on the Soul in Later Neoplatonism: Iamblichus, Damascius and Priscianus*, Brussel, 1978, p. 108-109

³⁶⁹ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm.* 272.27-273.11 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 49.7-50.4)

³⁷⁰ However, Damascius' Theodicy can be found in the works of his pupil Simplicius, notably in Simplicius' commentary on Epictetus, see in particular: SIMPLICIUS, *In Epict. Ench.* 35.245-273, 38.738-746 and I. HADOT (ed.), *Simplicius. Commentaire sur le Manuel d'Épictète*, Brill, 1996, p. 83-107. For the Neoplatonic Theodicy and the future of the souls, see the following summary: I. HADOT (ed.), *Simplicius. Commentaire sur le Manuel d'Épictète. Chapitres I-XXIX*, Les Belles Lettres, 2001, p. cxxix-clxii (for Proclus' Theodicy, see: R. CHLUP, *Proclus. An Introduction*, Cambridge University Press, 2012, p. 201-233 and J. PHILLIPS, *Order From Disorder. Proclus' Doctrine of Evil and its Roots in Ancient Platonism*, Brill, 2007)

³⁷¹ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm.* 256.20-23 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 19.9-13). See also: 265.3-10, 272.27-273.11 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 34.1-11, 49.7-50.4)

³⁷² DAMASCIUS, *In Parm.* 270.27-271.2, 272.24-26 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 45.13-20, 49.3-6)

³⁷³ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm.* 250.20-23 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 9.4-9)

³⁷⁴ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm.* 248.20-249.1, 249.21-24, 263.14-18, 266.10-25 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 5.19-6.11, 7.15-19, 31.5-9, 36.3-37.4)

³⁷⁵ The fact that, for Damascius, the soul is an *Aufhebung*-item has been well seen by Wahl, see: J. WAHL, *Etude sur le Parménide de Platon*, F. Rieder, 1926, p. 172

In Parm., 250.25-251.5³⁷⁶: Πάντα γὰρ ἐν αὐτῇ τὰ πρὸ αὐτῆς, ἃ διεῖλεν εἰς τὸ ἐγγχρονον καὶ τὸ ἄγχρονον ὁ Παρμενίδης, καὶ πάντα ἐν αὐτῇ τὰ μεθ' ἐαυτήν, ἃ διὰ τῶν ἀποφάσεων ἐνδείκνυται. Οὕτω γὰρ τὸ οὐχ ἐν καὶ οὐ πολλά καὶ οὐχ ὄν ἐν αὐτῇ ἐννοοῦμεν. Καὶ μηδεὶς οἰέσθω τὰς [διὰ] τοῦ ἐξαίφνης ἀποφάσεις τὰ χεῖρω εἰσάγειν· αὐταὶ γὰρ καὶ τὰ κρείττω ὁμοῦ τοῖς χείροσιν εἰσηγοῦνται. Πρὸ γὰρ τῆς τοῦ χρόνου μετοχῆς, ἐν τῷ ἄγχρονῳ τε καὶ ἐξαίφνης, ἔν τέ ἐστι καὶ οὐχ ἐν καὶ πολλά <καὶ οὐ πολλά>. Διὸ καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα ἐπάγει τὸ χρόνου μετέχειν, ὡσάν ἐκείνων πρὸ πολλά. Διὸ καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα ἐπάγει τὸ χρόνου μετέχειν, ὡσάν ἐκείνων πρὸ χρόνου ὄντων ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ. Αἱ δὲ τοῦ ἐξαίφνης ἀποφάσεις τὰς κατὰ γένεσιν ἀνῆρουν καταφάσεις τὰς ἀπὸ τοῦ χρόνου προελθούσας, ἀλλ' οὐ τὸ ἐν καὶ πολλά καὶ τὸ εἶναι, οὐδὲ τὰς τούτοις ἀντικειμένους ἀποφάσεις, τὸ οὐχ ἐν καὶ οὐ πολλά καὶ οὐκ ὄν, ἃς δὴ ταύτας φημί προλείπειν εἶναι τῶν ἄλλων ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ, <ὧν> ὡς περὶ τὰ σώματα μεριστῶν ἐν αὐτῇ ἀποτιθέμεθα τὰ παραδείγματα.

The soul contains all the predicates which are before it and which Parmenides has divided into the temporal and the timeless, and the soul also contains all those that are posterior and which he indicates by the negations. That is how we conceive in the soul the non-one, the no-many, and the no-being. And let no one believe that the negations of the sudden introduce the worst predicates, because they also introduce the best at the same time as the worst ones. In fact, before the participation with time, in the timeless and the sudden, there is one and non-one, many <and no-many>. This is why [Parmenides] introduces the predicate 'participating with time' after these predicates, insofar as they are in the soul before time. The negations of the sudden destroy – that is well known – the assertions which concern the becoming and which proceeded of time, but they do not destroy the one, the many, the being, nor the negations which are opposed to them, the non-one, the no-many, and the non-being – these negations, I say, which are in the soul as the anticipation of the sensible ones, whose they are the paradigms, insofar as they are divided in the bodies.

The essential negativity of the 'soul' is therefore not strictly the same as the negativity of the 'sudden'. In this text, Damascius plays with several kinds of negations, as the quotation of the *Sophist* few lines above makes obvious³⁷⁷. Indeed, following Proclus³⁷⁸, Damascius strongly distinguishes three kinds of negation, from the *hypernegation* that concerns only the higher levels of reality and that can be found in the First Hypothesis to the *privation* that concerns the sensible world³⁷⁹. While hypernegation is the generative

³⁷⁶ = W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 9.11-28

³⁷⁷ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm.*, 249.24-29 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 7.19-8.3)

³⁷⁸ PROCLUS, *In Parm.*, VI 1072.18-1077.17, *Platonic Theology*, I 12 57.21-24, II 5 38.18-25, II 10 63.8-20 (see also the scholium at *In Remp.*, I 265.26 available in G. KROLL (ed.), *Procli Diadochi. In Platonis Rem Publicam commentarii*, Teubner, vol. 2, 1965, p. 375.5-8). See: W. BEIERWALTES, *Proklos. Grundzüge seiner Metaphysik*, Frankfurt, 1965, p. 341-343 and J. N. MARTIN, "Existence, Negation and Abstraction in the Neoplatonic Hierarchy", in *History and Philosophy of Logic*, 16, 1995, p. 169-196, "Proclus and the Neoplatonic Syllogistic", in *Journal of Philosophical Logic*, 30-3, 2001, p. 194-210. Unfortunately for my purpose, in the course of his formalized reconstruction of Proclus' logic, Martin is only focused on the hypernegation and the privation. By the way, as Martin (amongst others) remarks, Hegel will remember the Neoplatonic hypernegation in drawing the triadic sequence of thesis-antithesis-synthesis.

³⁷⁹ I do not agree with Metry-Tresson when she argues that ὑπεραποφάσεις necessarily refers to a linguistic item and that Damascius would draw a clear distinction between (ὑπερ)αποφάσεις and ἀναίρεσις (given that the ἀναίρεσις of the One is strictly equivalent to the παντελὸς ἀπόφασις by which the Ineffable is glimpsed): C. METRY-TRESSON, *L'aporie ou l'expérience des limites de la pensée dans le Péri Archôn de Damaskios*, Brill, 2012, p. 190-234. By the way, to some extent, excepted J. N. Martin, when the modern scholars quarrel with each other about the *via negationis* or the status of negation in Proclus and Damascius, they should avoid accumulating the worst fallacies and sophisms on the 'nothing', the 'all', the 'being' or the 'other', and remember the words of W. V. O. Quine

principle of both assertions and negations, namely is beyond the predication itself, anterior and superior to all predicates, there remains two kinds of genuine negations: the first – exegetically sustained by the analysis of the *Sophist* about the non-being *qua* other³⁸⁰ – is a negative predicate that is neither inferior nor superior to its affirmative twin (given that, here, the negative predicate is nothing less than the *reflection* of the assertive, in such a way that they are mutually mirrored in the same fashion as truthness and falseness are³⁸¹), and the second is a negative predicate that is inferior to the assertion inasmuch as this negative predicate is nothing more than the *privation* – or the *lack* – of the affirmative one. The real negative predicates seem to belong to the realm of the Forms, that is to say to the timeless level of Intelligible within which they share the same properties as the affirmative predicates and cohabit with them, whereas the privative predicates must be applied only to the γένεσις-realm that experiences duration and flow.

Thus, saying that the soul is essentially both A and ¬A means that the negative predicate ¬A belongs to the first category, namely its ‘ontic’ dignity is the equal to the dignity of the assertive predicate A³⁸², in such a way that, beyond the discursive oddity, ¬A can cohabit with A in the same <non-physical> place. Such cohabitation occurs in the soul in which the opposite predicates should be understood as anterior and paradigms of the sensible assertions and privations³⁸³. Its logical structure explains why the soul is the only entity that travels throughout the multi-layered ontic hierarchy: being in itself all the predicates, the soul wants to successively take part in each of them, in such a way that the *Parmenides* can be read as the tale of the psychic odyssey³⁸⁴. Damascius clarifies such a cohabitation by explaining that these opposite predicates are not *juxtaposed* as two separate layers into the soul, but are *blended* together to constitute a unique ‘amphibious nature’ which clearly is an *Aufhebung*-item that *anticipates* the opposite predicates such as they alternately appear in the sensible world³⁸⁵. The metaphor of the mixture does not

available in *Word and Object*, §27, §53. On the *via negationis*, see the fundamental study: R. MORTLEY, *From Word to Silence*, Hanstein, 2 vol., 1986 (especially, for Neoplatonism: vol. 2, p. 85-127)

³⁸⁰ Especially: PLATO, *Sophist*, 240a4-c2 and 258b1-2. On Proclus’ quotation of this last passage of the *Sophist*, see: H. D. SAFFREY, L. G. WESTERINK (eds.), *Proclus. Théologie platonicienne*, Les Belles Lettres, vol. 2, 1974, p. 39, n. 1 (p. 99-100)

³⁸¹ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm*, 249.24-29 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 7.19-8.3)

³⁸² Sometimes, however, Damascius suggests that the soul is more adequately defined by its negative predicates insofar as they express its better nature, namely its eternal being, while the assertive predicates show its temporal becoming. I guess the reason of why he says that is as follows: the negation may be interpreted as hypernegation, in such a way that the soul would have a ‘family-resemblance’ with the higher levels of being: DAMASCIUS, *In Parm*, 263.18-19, 266.5-7 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 31.9-11, 35.17-19)

³⁸³ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm*, 251.15-18 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 10.14-18)

³⁸⁴ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm*, 271.8-10 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 46.3-6). See also: *In Parm*, 255.26-30. Trouillard has particularly emphasized this point: J. TROUILLARD, “L’âme du *Timée* et l’Un du *Parménide* dans la perspective néoplatonicienne”, in *Revue Internationale de Philosophie*, 92-2, 1970, p. 236-251, “Le *Parménide* de Platon et son interpretation néoplatonicienne”, in *Revue de Philosophie et de Théologie*, 23, 1973, p. 83-100. See also: S. AHBEL-RAPPE, “Damascius on the Third Hypothesis of the *Parmenides*”, in J. D. TURNER, K. CORRIGAN (eds.), *Plato’s Parmenides and its heritage, vol. 2: Its Reception in Neoplatonic, Jewish and Christian Texts*, Society of Biblical Literature, 2010, p. 153-156 and J. COMBÈS, “Damascius, lecteur du *Parménide*”, in *Etudes Néoplatoniciennes*, J. Millon 1996, p. 87, p. 95-99, “Négativité et procession des principes chez Damascius”, in *Etudes Néoplatoniciennes*, J. Millon 1996, p. 126-129

³⁸⁵ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm*, 251.19-252.6, 262.29-263.28 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 10.19-11.19, 30.10-31.23). For another meaning of the way that a higher level anticipates κατ’ ιδιότητα (but not κατ’ ὑπόστασιν) the properties of the lower levels which proceed from it, see: *De Princ*, I 268.3-26 (= W&C, vol. 3, 1991, p. 80.6-81.22)

mean that the soul is a compound being, but rather emphasizes the fact that the soul is an intermediary being within which the opposite properties cannot actually be separated, albeit their opposite ‘powers’ are both-together present³⁸⁶. Indeed, according to the Neoplatonic Principle of Continuity, between the level of assertive predicates – the Second Hypothesis –, and the level of the purely negative ones – the Fifth Hypothesis –, there should be a level in which assertive and negative predicates are combined with an equal strength, in such a way that they really are indistinguishable³⁸⁷. The mixture is therefore only a metaphor by means of which the identity of the opposites into the soul can be indicated or approximated. For instance, such an image can illustrate very well the uncatchable nature of the αὐτοκίνητον that is intermediary between the ἀκίνητον and the ἐτεροκίνητον³⁸⁸. As Proclus³⁸⁹, Damascius is perfectly aware that understanding the intermediate nature exceeds our discursive arsenal and needs the use of literary tools. Thus, both, on the one hand, the distinction between several kinds of negations and, on the other, the use of metaphor as a means for the asymptotic method of ἔνδειξις that aims at approximating the stuff discursively inaccessible³⁹⁰, allow to temper the ‘proto-Hegelian’ overtone and its threat on the law of Contradiction.

By contrast with the soul, the ‘sudden’ is said to be neither A nor \neg A, because in itself *sensible* assertions and their privations are equally denied. The soul is said to be neither A nor \neg A in the same way. Thus, it appears that the negativity of the soul is more complex and rich than the negativity of the ἐξαίρων, albeit its negativity integrates the negativity of the ‘sudden’.

Furthermore, by virtue of its logical neutrality, the ‘sudden’ is a kind of keyhole by means of which the timeless predicates within the psychic kernel can be glimpsed, beyond the superficial alternation of the temporal predicates of the soul³⁹¹. By contrast, the logical determining of the stretches of time, namely the phases between which the sudden switch happens, that directly results from the Bivalence and the Excluded Middle, partially hides the psychic kernel either behind the temporal assertions or behind their privations. This recovering of the psychic core by the rapid change of sensible attributions involves the modification of the essential participation of the soul, in such a way that, although the soul always and at once bears the opposites within itself, the one or other property can alternately prevail (and it is this prevailing variable attribution which is expressed by the sensible waltz), and the soul can become more and less what it is without thereby losing

³⁸⁶ The model of the psychic mixture in Neoplatonism is far to be clear-cut, insofar as it seems to oscillate between the Aristotelian and the Stoic paradigms. Here, Damascius likely follows the Aristotelian model of *GC* I 10 & II 7 to which Alexander of Aphrodisias had devoted a full treatise. For instance, Damascius, as Aristotle, firstly rejects the combination understood as juxtaposition (atomism) in favour of fusion (continuism), and secondly considers that in the mixture the components keep their ‘powers’ (327b22-31). Moreover, Aristotle explicitly describes the mixture as an intermediary between the strengths of its components: Ὅταν δὲ ταῖς δυνάμεσιν ἰσάζη πως, τότε μεταβάλλει μὲν ἐκάτερον εἰς τὸ κρατοῦν ἐκ τῆς αὐτοῦ φύσεως, οὐ γίνεται δὲ θάτερον, ἀλλὰ μεταξὺ καὶ κοινόν (328a28-31, see also: *GC* II 7 334b2-20). But, albeit Damascius seems rather to follow Aristotle, some properties of Chrysippus’ κρᾶσις would have seduced the Neoplatonists.

³⁸⁷ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm*, 248.15-20 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 5.12-18)

³⁸⁸ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm*, 263.8-10 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 30.22-26)

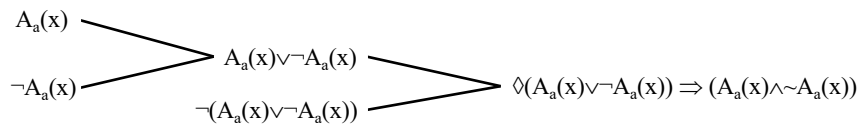
³⁸⁹ PROCLUS, *In Tim*, III 25.19-24

³⁹⁰ On the link between ἔνδειξις and the Euclidean algorithm of continual and alternated subtraction, see: V. BÉGUIN, “Ineffable et indicible chez Damascius”, in *Les Etudes philosophiques*, 4, 2013, p. 561, n. 37

³⁹¹ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm*, 249.10-18, 251.11-14 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 6.23-7.10, 10.8-12)

its self³⁹². If so, the soul, in the course of its ascent and descent throughout the scale of being, experiences the indivisibility in varying degrees, from the genuine unity to almost worst scattering³⁹³. Once again, the metaphor of the mixture can illustrate (better, I think, than the curious metaphor of the sponge³⁹⁴) such a prevailing, given that one or another ingredient can predominate, insofar as its strength is intensified, without wiping out the blended unity. Such differentiation within the soul between – as it were – an invariant core and a modifiable surface is corroborated by Simplicius, insofar as the pupil of Damascius supports that although the οὐσία is not in itself able of more and less, such a relativity is involved by the variation of its οὐσιώδης μέθεξις³⁹⁵. That way, Damascius rejects both the theory of Plotinus that the higher part of the soul remains above, viz. in the intelligible world, because this theory breaks the psychic unity³⁹⁶, and the Heraclitean theory that the soul falls entirely in the γένεσις-realm wherein the soul runs the risk of losing quite identity³⁹⁷.

Damascius' idea can be depicted by a kind of truth-tree in which the specific kind of negation that can cohabit with its opposite assertion is indicated by \sim , and the *sensible* privation by \neg . That is a Neoplatonic common belief that all possibilities can be exhausted somewhere into the multi-layered whole³⁹⁸. According to both the Principles of Continuity and of Plenitude, if the 'blended' opposite predicates within the soul are in a way the paradigms of the posteriors happening into the sensible world, then the unrealization/privation as well as the realization/assertion should happen somewhere³⁹⁹.



Here, the rank of the deployment/breakdown can show the 'distance' from the psychic kernel. Inasmuch as $x \in E$, it falls in the step of $\neg(A_a(x) \vee \neg A_a(x))$, and, if so, it is 'closer' to the εἶδος of the soul, which is expressed by $(A_a(x) \wedge \sim A_a(x))$, than the durative phase $x \in X$ for which the step is either $A_a(x)$ or $\neg A_a(x)$.

³⁹² DAMASCIUS, *In Parm*, 263.14-18, 263.29-264.9, 271.3-21, 272.3-14 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 31.5-9, 32.1-15, 45.21-46.22, 47.15-48.8)

³⁹³ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm*, 251.29-252.6, 255.4-30 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 11.9-19, 16.21-18.9)

³⁹⁴ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm*, 255.5-8 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 16.23-17.4)

³⁹⁵ SIMPLICIUS, *In Cat*, 288.34-289.4: ἀλλ' οὐ κατὰ τὸ ἐνυλον οἶμα δεῖ τὸ μᾶλλον καὶ ἥττον λαμβάνειν, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὸ ἐπέισακτον καὶ ἥττον οὐσιώδεις. καὶ γὰρ ἡ μὲν οὐσία κατ' αὐτὸ τὸ εἶναι ὅπερ λέγεται θεωρουμένη οὐκ ἔχει τὸ μᾶλλον καὶ ἥττον, ἡ δὲ ποιότης κατὰ τὴν ἐν τῇ οὐσίᾳ μέθεξιν ὑφεστῶσα εἰκότως ἐπιδέχεται τοῦτο, καὶ μᾶλλον μὲν ἐν τοῖς ἥττον οὐσιώδεσιν, ἥττον δὲ ἐν τοῖς οὐσιωδεστέροις, ὥσπερ ἐν τοῖς σχήμασιν.

³⁹⁶ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm*, 254.3-19. On this passage, see: C. STEEL, *The Changing Self. A Study on the Soul in Later Neoplatonism: Iamblichus, Damascius and Priscianus*, Brussel, 1978, p. 49-50 and I. HADOT (ed.), *Simplicius. Commentaire sur le Manuel d'Epictète*, Brill, 1996, p. 76-77

³⁹⁷ This alternative appears in a very clear-cut way in Simplicius, see: (Ps.-)SIMPLICIUS, *In DA*, 5.38-6.17

³⁹⁸ See for instance: SIMPLICIUS, *In Epict. Ench*, 35.253-273. On the Neoplatonic Principle of Plenitude, see: A. O. LOVEJOY, *The Great Chain of Beings*, Harvard University Press, 1936, p. 61-66 and T. KUKKONEN, "Proclus on Plenitude", in *Dionysius*, 18, 2000, p. 103-128 (for an opposite opinion: A. SUMI, "The Psyche, The Forms and the Creative One: Toward Reconstruction of Neoplatonic Metaphysics", in R. BAINE HARRIS (ed.), *Neoplatonism and Contemporary Thought. Part One*, SUNY Press, 2002 p. 239-241)

³⁹⁹ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm*, 266.1-9 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 35.11-22)

Of course, if time is conceived in such a way that it is always possible to mark whenever a durationless boundary, Damascius' conception remains, to some extent, very close to Proclus', even though Damascius forcefully criticizes it⁴⁰⁰. But, precisely, that is not the case for the last diadochus for whom time, as well as motion, is constituted by components that are genuinely extended and uncuttable.

Indeed, Damascius had challenged Zeno's and Aristotle's⁴⁰¹ paradoxes by saying that the flux of motion and time cannot be continuous compounds of sizeless entities that are limits (viz. cannot be composed out of *dimensionless* components)⁴⁰². That is undoubtedly the most original and best-known point of Damascius' kinematics⁴⁰³. Following Aristotle, Damascius supports the view according to which a continuous magnitude cannot be composed out of discrete and non-extended units. Consequently, if motion and time were extended and continuous, then they must be composed of extended components. Insofar as, from a Neoplatonist point of view, the encosmic world above all is characterized by its infinite divisibility that forcefully contrasts with the indivisibility of the inhabitants of the higher diacosms, the continuity highly befits time and, at least, corporeal motion. They therefore must be composed out of extended components and not of sizeless elements. These components are understood by Damascius as *demiurgic* extended cuts⁴⁰⁴ (called 'sections/διαστήματα', 'leaps/ἄλματα' or 'jerks/πηδήματα') of a whole-time – which is a kind of *aeviternity* present in the World-Soul⁴⁰⁵ – and of a whole-becoming (viz. the flux

⁴⁰⁰ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm*, 262.8-29 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 29.1-30.0)

⁴⁰¹ ARISTOTLE, *Phys*, 4.10 217b29-218a30

⁴⁰² Damascius has expounded his kinematics in several of his writings, namely in his commentaries on the *Parmenides*, on the *Timaeus*, and in an independent treatise entitled *On Number, Space and Time*. Extracts of these kinematical accounts can be found in: DAMASCIUS, *In Parm*, 236.2-238.12, 240.23-242.30, 243.18-20 (= W&C, vol. 3, 2001, p. 182.10-185.24, p. 189.13-192.29, p. 194.5-7), in SIMPLICIUS, *In Phys*, 774.28-800.21. On this theory, see: M. CHASE, "Whitehead and Damascius on Time", in J. M. ZAMORA CALVO (ed.), *Neoplatonic Questions*, Verlag, 2014, p. 131-149, M.-C. GALPERINE, "Le temps intégral selon Damascius", in *Les Etudes philosophiques*, 3, 1980, p. 325-341; P. DUHEM, *Le Système du Monde. Histoire des doctrines cosmologiques de Platon à Copernic*, Hermann, vol. 1, 1913, p. 263-271; Ph. HOFFMANN, "Παράτασις. De la description aspectuelle des verbes grecs à une définition du temps dans le néoplatonisme tardif", in *Revue des Etudes Grecques*, t. 96, fasc. 455-459, 1983, p. 1-26; S. SAMBURSKY, "The Concept of Time in Late Neoplatonism", in *Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Science and Humanities*, II 8, 1966, p. 153-165; S. SAMBURSKY, S. PINES (eds.), *The Concept of Time in Late Neoplatonism. Texts with Translation, Introduction and Notes*, Jerusalem, 1971, p. 18-20 and R. SORABJI, *Time, creation and the continuum*, Duckworth, 1983, p. 52-63, p. 361-362, p. 380

⁴⁰³ Some 'Diodorean' aspects of Damascius' kinematics are examined in the last part of "Diodorus Kronos on Motion against Aristotle's Kinematics: a crypto-defence of Plato's Dynamics?", 2017

⁴⁰⁴ On the demiurgic sections in Damascius' thought, see: DAMASCIUS, *De Princ*, I 198.19-23 (= W&C, vol. 2, 1989, p. 178.1-5), *In Parm*, 56.5-7, 83.5-7, 242.9-21 (= W&C, vol. 1, 1997, p. 89.4-6, vol. 2, 1997, p. 26.16-20, vol. 3, 2001, p. 192.1-17)

⁴⁰⁵ P. GOLITSIS, *Les Commentaires de Simplicius et Philopon à la Physique d'Aristote. Tradition et innovation*, de Gruyter, 2008, p. 171-174 and C. STEEL, "The Neoplatonic Doctrine of Time and Eternity and its Influence on Medieval Philosophy", in P. PORRO (ed.), *The Medieval Concept of Time. Studies on the Scholastic Debate and its Reception in Early Modern Philosophy*, Brill, 2001, p. 12-16. For Damascius, time is one of the four 'gathering measures' by means of which the Demiurge puts the sensible realm in order, more precisely time "measures the extension (διάστασις) of the activity deployed in motion (κατὰ τὴν ἐν κινήσει ἐνέργειαν)" (SIMPLICIUS, *In Phys*, 625.28-29, see also: 735.17-736.1). On the four 'gathering measures' (viz. number, place, time and magnitude), see: SIMPLICIUS, *In Phys*, 625.4-32, 634.13-24, 636.34-637.21, 640.26-641.10, 645.15-19, 773.20-775.31 and P. GOLITSIS, *Les Commentaires de Simplicius et Philopon à la Physique d'Aristote*.

of existence/τὴν ῥοὴν τοῦ εἶναι)⁴⁰⁶. In doing so, Damascius guarantees their reality, or, at least, the fact that they are not just some arbitrary stretches resulting from the discriminating activity of the human mind that is very contingent and idiosyncratic⁴⁰⁷. In

Tradition et innovation, de Gruyter, 2008, p. 160-163. For the Demiurge *qua* source of time (χρόνος πηγαιός), see: DAMASCIUS, *In Parm*, 235.6-17 (= W&C, vol. 3, 2001, p. 181.7-22)

⁴⁰⁶ The fluent γένεσις (also called ‘flux of existence/τὴν ῥοὴν τοῦ εἶναι’ or ‘duration/παράτασις’) is a universal and underlying *first-order* process, whereas the categorical and transient motions (and rests) of particular items – for instance the heavenly revolutions – are *second-order* processes that supervene upon the flux of becoming by implementing their patterns on it. Indeed, for harmonizing Aristotle’s and Plato’s kinetics, the Neoplatonist thinkers hold that there are two kinds of motions, namely the four-categorical ones (in fact, there are more than four categorical motions, since Simplicius argue that relational change is also a motion *per se*), and the ‘motion’ of the becoming considered as a whole called *duration* or *flux of existence*. The unicity of time is involved and guarantee precisely by the fact that time is actually the measure of *duration* (παράτασις) of beings beyond the variety of their categorical or *second-order* processes. By virtue of this twofold kinetic level, the *second-order* processes, as are the celestial kinetic rotations (which belong to a subset of the *categorical* motions, viz. the *local* ones), cannot cut or break the *first-order* process in actuality, but only potentially (see the footnote below). The demiurgic *quanta* are the components of the *first-order* process, the fluent becoming, while the components of the *second-order* processes are kinetic leaps that are quantitatively equivalent to some divisions of the demiurgic *quanta* (either a rational or an irrational section) and therefore can be measured by them. On the fluent becoming as an underlying *first-order* process of which time is the measure, see: DAMASCIUS, *In Parm*, 238.1-12, 240.23-241.8, 241.20-242.30 (= W&C, vol. 3, 2001, p. 185.9-24, p. 189.13-190.8, p. 191.1-192.29); SIMPLICIUS, *In Phys*, 720.34-721.26, 731.7-20, 744.10-31, 767.23-25, 787.29-788.5. See also: S. WATERLOW, *Nature, Change, and Agency in Aristotle’s Physics*, Oxford Clarendon Press, 1982, p. 107-108. On the division of *second-order* processes into motions and rests, see: DAMASCIUS, *In Parm*, 241.20-242.9 (= W&C, vol. 3, 2001, p. 191.1-26). This last thesis reinforces the consistency of Platonic kinematics, insofar as the change from rest to motion – both understood as *second-order* processes – is not a special case of change anymore, and, consequently, the case of *moving/resting* at an instant either (against ARISTOTLE, *Phys*, 6.3. 234a24-b9, 8 239a10-b4 and R. SORABJI, *Time, creation and the continuum*, Duckworth, 1983, p. 409-415). Likely, Plato already had in mind this twofold kinetic level, and, for this reason, he was perfectly allowed to treat the transition from motion to rest in the same way as the other changes (*Parm*, 156a-c, 156e-157b).

⁴⁰⁷ For Damascius, dividing time into past, present and future is relative to the observatory reference frame, while time in itself is a single being. This relativistic claim means that the present now, viz. the indexical νῦν, is *egocentric* insofar as it results from a psychic cut. Moreover, egocentric divisions and now have only *potential* existence, inasmuch as they divide the flux of becoming and of time only in thought. This relativity of time is emphasized by some modern commentators as Duhem, but at the risk of making Damascius’ kinematics inconsistent. Indeed, this thesis seems to break the compatibility between Damascius’ and Simplicius’ testimonies. On the one hand, in his commentary on the end of the Second Hypothesis, Damascius claims first, that motion and time are constituted of *real* and *actual* ‘demiurgic’ leaps and, second, that the νῦν is such a demiurgic leap (*In Parm*, 236.2-238.12, 240.23-242.30, 243.18-20), whereas, on the other, Simplicius’ testimony depicts the νῦν as egocentric and merely *potential* (*In Phys*, 798.8-799.8). The apparent contradiction is connected to Simplicius’ dilemma in regard of his master’s position. Simplicius points that time is made up either of a segmented series of adjacent time-*quanta* (in agreement with Simplicius’ previous description of Damascius’ position: *In Phys*, 796.27-797.26), or of a continuous flowing item, but cannot be both (*In Phys*, 797.27.36). I argue that both evidences are compatible, even more are two different corollaries of Damascius’ physics. In fact, if all psychic cuts are activity of thought, there is a radical difference between a demiurgic activity of cutting and a non-demiurgic one. Unlike the activities of sensible beings, whether superlunary or sublunary, which live into the world produced under the demiurgic supervision without producing it in regard of the emanative multi-layered

fact, the lower souls only imitate the demiurgic cutting that grounds the composition of the various physical continua, but their cuts do not have the same ontological weight as those of the νοῦς δημιουργικός who produces time and becoming by the welding of several extended νῦν and of several portions of γένεσις. These demiurgic ‘leaps’ allow Damascius to claim that motion and time proceed in extended sections that are not further cuttable, in other words they proceed by *quanta*⁴⁰⁸. That way, the metrical puzzle of the composition of continuum is resolved. Nevertheless, in a sense, each part of motion is both indivisible (ἀμέριστον) and divisible (μεριστόν), namely abstractly divisible because extended and indivisible because it is a concrete component of every motion, in such a way that, as its parts, continuous motion is also divisible and indivisible: for example, walk is concretely composed of a finite number of steps, and abstractly by miles or other units of length which are infinitely dividable in thought.

However, it must be remarked, for the first time I believe⁴⁰⁹, that the infinite division of the demiurgic *quanta* by human minds is the consequence of the phase difference between the perfect activity of the Demiurge and the imperfect activities of the lower souls which are, to some degree, corrupted by their – voluntary – company with the bodily infraworld and its disorderly agitation (occasioned, in a Proclean way, by the coalescence of the inchoate forms with matter⁴¹⁰). The divine and perfect souls of the seven planets and of the fixed stars which are described by the Second Hypothesis are in phase with the demiurgic cutting, hence the fact that the celestial bodies move by stellar ‘leaps’ which can serve as clocks for the encosmic world. They indicate the true segmentation of time that *ordinates* and *measures* the fluent becoming, insofar as their ticks mark off the rhythm of the becoming in agreement with the demiurgic activity. Unlike them, the activities of the sublunary souls and the activities of the sublunary bodies play the role of *additional* and *accidental* clocks which are often out of phase with the heavenly clocks and, for this reason, break the rhythm of the becoming by putting their own divisions. Since the activities and the motions of these lower entities are very contingent and can take any

constitution of the whole reality, the demiurgic activity has an ontological weight, precisely because the Demiurgic Intellect (νοῦς δημιουργικός) is the entity who produces and puts the sensible realm in order (with the collaboration of the Vivifying Intellect (νοῦς ζωογόνος) called Hecate-Rhea however). Therefore, in regard of the *first-order* products, only the demiurgic cut is *actual*, while a non-demiurgic cut is merely *potential*, in such a way that the flux of becoming and the flowing time are composed out of actual and indivisible demiurgic *quanta*, but also potentially infinitely dividable in thought (in perfect accordance with *In Parm*, 242.9-21 (= W&C, vol. 3, 2001, p. 192.1-17)). The twofold kinetic level results directly from the difference between the demiurgic activity of cutting and the non-demiurgic one, a difference that clears up Simplicius’ suspicion in regard of the consistency of Damascius’ position.

⁴⁰⁸ S. SAMBURSKY, S. PINES (eds.), *The Concept of Time in Late Neoplatonism. Texts with Translation, Introduction and Notes*, Jerusalem, 1971, p. 18-20 and M. J. WHITE, *The Continuous and the Discrete. Ancient Physical Theories from a Contemporary Perspective*, Oxford Clarendon Press, 1992, p. 314-315, p. 317-319

⁴⁰⁹ Nevertheless, Sorabji was close to do this claim: R. SORABJI, *Time, creation and the continuum*, Duckworth, 1983, p. 55-56. I have presented this point in Los Angeles: “Damascius’ Theodicy: Psychic Input of Disorder and Evil into the World”, 16th Annual ISNS (International Society for Neoplatonic Studies) Conference, Loyola Marymount University, 14th June 2018

⁴¹⁰ Such a mixture of inchoate and mutually disturbing forms with matter corresponds to the third substrate called ὁπατόν, see: PROCLUS, *De malorum subsistentia*, §34. On Proclus’ differentiation between matter and proto-corporeal substrate, see: G. VAN RIEL, “Proclus on Matter and Physical Necessity”, in R. CHIARADONNA, F. TRABATTONI (eds.), *Physics and Philosophy of Nature in Greek Neoplatonism*, Brill, 2009, p. 231-257

possible pace, the demiurgic *quanta* can be infinitely divided in an abstract or in a fictional way⁴¹¹, but without threatening the ontic weight and unity specific to the demiurgic products.

The phase difference, in addition, introduces the geometrical incommensurability in the world, while it is absent from the higher levels of the ontic hierarchy. Indeed, the discovering of the irrational magnitude had deeply embarrassed the Pythagoreans⁴¹², and Plato had tried to restrain it into the sensible place or, more precisely, to explain it by the dyadic ‘gap’ that occurs between the ontic layers⁴¹³. Damascius is in position to explain the coming of the incommensurability – and, consequently, of the disorder and of the evil⁴¹⁴ – into a novel and coherent Platonistic framework, namely by the phase difference between the activities of the higher and of the lower inhabitants of the ontic scale⁴¹⁵. By virtue of this, the infinite divisibility of the continuum is not, axiologically, a neutral point, but directly results from the imperfection of the sublunary souls, insofar as the higher and divine souls do not experience the fall into the divisibility, and therefore into the unceasing divisibility of the γένεσις-realm. The activities of lower souls and the sublunary bodily motions (and rests) are often out of phase with the real and demiurgic rhythm of the ceaseless becoming, and for this reason, they are able to cut – of course, only abstractly and not concretely – indefinitely the continuum into infinitely varying pseudo-*quanta*⁴¹⁶.

⁴¹¹ S. AHBEL-RAPPE, “Damascius on the Third Hypothesis of the *Parmenides*”, in J. D. TURNER, K. CORRIGAN (eds.), *Plato's Parmenides and its heritage*, vol. 2: *Its Reception in Neoplatonic, Jewish and Christian Texts*, Society of Biblical Literature, 2010, p. 155

⁴¹² M. CAVEING, *L'irrationalité dans les mathématiques grecques jusqu'à Euclide: la constitution u type mathématique de l'idéalité dans la pensée grecque*, Septentrion, 1998, p. 320-331

⁴¹³ PLATO, *Timaeus*, 48e-52c, 57d-58c, *Laws*, X 893c-894a; Ps-PLATO, *Epinomis*, 990c-991b and ARISTOTLE, *Met.*, A 9 992a10-14, M 9 1085a9-12. See: J. VUILLEMIN, “La section de la ligne dans la *République* (VI, 509d26-28)”, in R. RASHED (ed.), *Mathématiques et philosophie de l'Antiquité à l'Âge classique. Etudes en hommage à Jules Vuillemin*, éditions du C.N.R.S., 1991, p. 1-20 and J. WINZENRIETH, “Après les nombres, après les idées: le statut des grandeurs au sein du platonisme”, in *Les Etudes philosophiques*, 1, 2018, p. 67-89 (especially p. 83-86)

⁴¹⁴ This idea according to which irrationality, phase difference and theodicy are intimately linked can also be found in another context, namely the discussion about the Great Year (Avicenna, Averroes, Nicole Oresme, Leibniz), see: M. RASHED, “Théodicée et Approximation: Avicenne”, in *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy*, 10, 2000, p. 223-257. On the Great Year, see: G. DE CALLATAY, *Annus Platonicus. A Study of World Cycles in Greek, Latin and Arabic Sources*, Peeters, 1996

⁴¹⁵ The conflation between a disordered motion and irrationality to explain the presence of evil into the encosmic world is a commonplace of Neoplatonism. This doctrine takes root in Plato's description of the χῶρα (*Timaeus*, 30a, 49b-50a, 52d-53b, 57d-58c, see also: *Phaedo*, 110a-114a). For instance, in Proclus, see: PROCLUS, *De malorum subsistentia*, §29, §34, §35, *In Tim.*, I 283.27-284.23, 325.30-328.9, 367.30-368.11, 382.20-389.16, 294.22-395.10, 404.22-31, 417.27-32, 419.26-420.2, II 153.25-154.1, *In Parm.*, IV 844.11-848.20 and J. PHILLIPS, *Order From Disorder. Proclus' Doctrine of Evil and its Roots in Ancient Platonism*, Brill, 2007, p. 93-150. But the instantiation of this doctrine by means of the phase difference cannot be found elsewhere than in Damascius' kinematics. In his commentary on the *Parmenides*, Damascius alludes to his earlier commentary on the *Timaeus* in which he had also expounded his kinematics (*In Parm.*, 236.13-15 (= W&C, vol. 3, 2001, p. 183.1-3)). Indeed, his quantum kinematics indubitably is very helpful for interpreting the demiurgy of the *Timaeus*, in particular, I think (without any evidence however), the harmonic constitution of the heavens, the intrinsic disordered motion of the χῶρα, and the constitution of the threefold mortal soul.

⁴¹⁶ Here, Damascius' idea seems to be very close to the construction of irrational numbers by Dedekind-cut: R. DEDEKIND, “Stetigkeit und irrationale Zahlen” (1872), in *Gesammelte mathematische Werke*, Band 3, p. 315-334. Yet, from a mathematical point of view, while the celestial revolutions can divide the demiurgic sections only in a rational way, in such a

This intimacy between the irrationality and the infinite divisibility is a well-known element of Greek Mathematics – the famous Theaetetus’ algorithm, viz. the ἀνθυφαίρεσις, of Euclid X 2⁴¹⁷ –, and its importance for Plato’s thought is also well documented⁴¹⁸, given that it seems to be an arcane key of his metaphysics⁴¹⁹. That is once more a sign of Damascius’ originality to implement this mathematical theorem into his unusual kinematics⁴²⁰ in order to support his Theodicy by highlighting the responsibility of the self-moved souls whereby the evil by-product⁴²¹ infiltrates the universe.

way that the set of all their possible cuts can only constitute the set of rational positive magnitudes (\mathbb{Q}^+), the sublunary beings can also cut the demiurgic sections in an irrational way and, in doing so, the set of all their possible cuts is the set of irrational positive magnitudes (\mathbb{R}^+). To borrow Poincaré’s distinction between several orders of continua (H. POINCARÉ, “Le continu mathématique”, in *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*, 1, 1893, p. 26-34), the set of heavenly pseudo-*quanta* could form a continuum of the first order with a countable cardinality (\aleph_0), whereas the set of sublunary pseudo-*quanta* is a continuum of the second order and has an uncountable or super-denumerable cardinality (\aleph_1). Both are dense, but only the sublunary set satisfies the Cantor-Dedekind axiom. Moreover, given that the number of celestial beings actually is limited, the set of heavenly pseudo-*quanta* is finite too (insofar as it depends on the number of different heavenly motions), hence the fact that the unceasing divisibility is a flavour specific to the sublunary realm.

⁴¹⁷ EUCLID, *Elements*, X 2. See: Th. L. HEATH, *A History of Greek Mathematics*, Oxford Clarendon Press, vol. 1, 1921, p. 206-207; P.-H. MICHEL, *De Pythagore à Euclide. Contribution à l’histoire des mathématiques préeuclidiennes*, Les Belles Lettres, 1950, p. 466-470 and I. TOTH, “Le problème de la mesure dans la perspective de l’être et du non-être. Zénon et Platon, Eudoxe et Dedekind: une généalogie philosophico-mathématique”, in R. RASHED (ed.), *Mathématiques et philosophie de l’Antiquité à l’Âge classique. Etudes en hommage à Jules Vuillemin*, éditions du C.N.R.S., 1991, p. 21-99

⁴¹⁸ D. H. FOWLER, *The Mathematics of Plato’s Academy*, Oxford Clarendon Press, 1999, p. 30-64 and J. VUILLEMIN, *Mathématiques pythagoriciennes et platoniciennes*, Blanchard, 2001, p. 122-143. For instance, Plato alludes explicitly to the ἀνθυφαίρεσις in *Theaetetus*, 147d4-8, see: H.-G. ZEUTHEN, “Sur les livres arithmétiques des *Eléments* d’Euclide”, in *Oversigt over det kongelige danske Videnskabernes Selskabs forhandlinger*, 1910, p. 395-435 and “Sur l’origine historique de la connaissance des quantités irrationnelles”, in *Oversigt over det kongelige danske Videnskabernes Selskabs forhandlinger*, 1915, p. 333-362

⁴¹⁹ Th. AUFFRET, “Un témoignage négligé de Théophraste sur la théorie platonicienne des lignes (*Métaph.*, 6a24-6b16)”, in A. JAULIN, D. LEFEBVRE (éds.), *La Métaphysique de Théophraste. Principes et apories*, Peeters, 2015, p. 27; M. RASHED, “Platon et les mathématiques”, in M. DIXSAUT, A. CASTEL-BOUCHOUCHI, G. KÉVORKIAN (eds.), *Lectures de Platon*, Ellipses, 2013, p. 220-226, I. BULMER-THOMAS, “Plato’s Theory of Number”, in *The Classical Quarterly*, 33-2, 1983, p. 375-384 and A. E. TAYLOR, “Review of J. Stenzel, *Zahl und Gestalt bei Platon und Aristoteles*, Leipzig, 1924”, in *Gnomon*, 2, 1926, p. 396-405, “Forms and Numbers. A Study in Platonic Metaphysics. I.”, in *Mind*, 35, 1926, p. 419-440, “Forms and Numbers. A Study in Platonic Metaphysics. II.”, in *Mind*, 36, 1927, p. 12-33

⁴²⁰ On another possible use of the Euclidean algorithm of continual and alternated subtraction in Damascius’ thought, see: V. BÉGUIN, “Ineffable et indicible chez Damascius”, in *Les Etudes philosophiques*, 4, 2013, p. 561, n. 37

⁴²¹ The general scheme of Neoplatonic Theodicy depicts evil as a *παρυσία*, viz. a *parasitic* existence that is produced *derivatively* in the course of the runoff of goodness from the Good itself. This parasitic and adventitious by-product is due to the limited receptivity of some beings that fail to fill up all the divine light and its goodness, and that are produced despite their essential deficiency in accordance with the universal validity of the Principle of Plenitude. God thereby wants neither imperfection nor evil, even more insofar as they appear surreptitiously during the production of last diacosms, they participate in spite of themselves to the total goodness of this production (in such a way that evil only exists from the perspective of parts, but not that of the whole). Thus, to borrow the neologism of Plato

Anyway, Damascius' kinematics is very different from Proclus', notably because only the lower souls are able to mark whenever a durationless boundary in the time-continuum, and their cuts are far from having an ontic basis as the demiurgic *quanta* are. Thus, the 'sudden', understood as a *real* durationless switch, can only occur between two demiurgic *quanta* that are not in themselves composed out of a dense set of sizeless instants⁴²². As a kinematic stuff, for Damascius, the ἐξαίφνης appears just at the junction between the demiurgic 'leaps', in such a way that Damascius cannot understand it in similar fashion as Proclus.

The ἐξαίφνης therefore is apart from time in the literal sense, inasmuch as it is situated between two temporal phases of durative processes which can be either some kind of *durative* motion or some kind of *durative* rest⁴²³. Strictly speaking, the 'sudden' does not belong to any phase of motion, insofar as it appears only at the durationless weld between two uncuttable periods, whether demiurgic or not.

However, as is often the case, Damascius makes the notion of ἐξαίφνης more complex by proceeding to a bifurcation between, on the one hand, the psychic ἐξαίφνης which is a

(*Theaetetus*, 176a4-8, on this passage, see: V. ILIEVSKI, "Traces of the Platonic Theory of Evil in the *Theaetetus*", in *Journal of Ancient Philosophy*, 11-1, 2017, p. 66-98) and to escape all Manichean temptation, evil is not in itself a genuine *contrary* to the good, but only its *subcontrary* (ὁπεναντίον which is, for Proclus, halfway between contrary and privation, see: PROCLUS, *De mal. subs.*, 52.1-7, 54.16-31 and *Parisianus Graecus* 1918, fol. 145-146 in M. RASHED, "Proclus, commentaire perdu sur la Palinodie du *Phèdre*: vestiges byzantins", in *L'héritage aristotélicien. Textes inédits de l'Antiquité*, Les Belles Lettres, 2016, p. 486-493, manuscript also edited in: C. J. LARRAIN, "Macarius Magnes, 'Αποκριτικὸς πρὸς Ἑλλήνας ein bislang unbeachtetes Exzerpt", in *Traditio*, 57, 2002, p. 85-127, "Das Exzerpt aus Macarius Magnes' *Apocriticus*", in *Traditio*, 59, 2004, p. 383-396) whose subsistence depends on that of the good. As it were, evil is a kind of legal loophole occurring during the very ordered distribution of goodness, that is to say an unintentional production of the best legislation possible. On the word παρρηόστασις in Neoplatonism, see: SYRIANUS, *In Met.*, 91.31, 105.25-32, 107.9; PROCLUS, *Theol. Plat.*, I.18 84.22, *In Alc.*, 118.18-23, *In Tim.*, I 375.15, 18, 381.7, 11, III 303.19, *In Remp.*, I 38.6, 11, 22, 40.25, 78.12, 117.6, 12, *In Eucl.*, 26.18, *De mal. subs.*, 49.11, 50.1-57, 54.11, 22, *De decem dub.*, 30.20, *In Parm.*, III 829.26, IV 923.13, V 987.5; SIMPLICIUS, *In Epict. Ench.*, 14.340-395, 35.184-204, 242-244, 498 (see also: *In Phys.*, 250.9-23 in which Simplicius makes an analogy between the pairs good/evil and form/matter by describing first privation as a subcontrary of the form (here Simplicius has surely in mind the *incomplete* privation rather than the *complete* one) and, second, matter as being a parasitic existence deriving from the form); Ps.-DIONYSIUS, *Div. Nom.*, IV 20 720d, 27 728d, 31 732c, 32 732d and A. C. LLOYD, "Parhypostasis in Proclus", in G. BOSS, G. SEEL (eds.), *Proclus et son influence*, Grand-Midi, 1987, p. 145-157

⁴²² S. SAMBURSKY, S. PINES (eds.), *The Concept of Time in Late Neoplatonism. Texts with Translation, Introduction and Notes*, Jerusalem, 1971, p. 19

⁴²³ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm.*, 261.1-262.8 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 26.21-28.23), especially for the 'sudden': 261.10, 25-26 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 27.5-6, 28.8-9)

demiurgic and vivifying form⁴²⁴, and, on the other, the physical νῦν⁴²⁵ which is an unreal halfway stage between past and future that mirrors the true ‘sudden’ only present into the soul⁴²⁶. In doing so, Damascius supports a twofold understanding of the ἐξαίφνης, insofar as the psychic ‘sudden’ is rather dynamic – given that it is the key of the psychic causation⁴²⁷ – while the physical is kinematic. The psychic ‘sudden’ *in fine* belongs to the οὐσία of the soul⁴²⁸, while the kinematic ‘sudden’ – that *imitates* it – is only present in its activities (ἐνέργειαι)⁴²⁹, namely in the processes produced by the soul *qua* efficient cause.

The bifurcation of the ‘sudden’ into two highly separated meanings seems to be briefly lightened as follows⁴³⁰:

In Parm, 264.21-265.3⁴³¹: Ἀλλὰ μὴν καὶ πρὸς τὸ ἐνδέκατον τοῦτο μὲν τὸ ἐξαίφνης ἀμερές ἐστι τῇ ιδιότητι, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἄχρονον, ἐκεῖνο δὲ χρόνου μέτρον ἦν καὶ διάστημα ὡς ἐδείκνυμεν, καὶ ἐκεῖνο μὲν ἐκάλει νῦν, ἵνα τὸν ἐνεστῶτα δηλώσῃ χρόνον, τοῦτο δὲ ἐξαίφνης ὠνόμασεν ὡς ἐκ τῶν ἀφανῶν καὶ ἐξηρημένων αἰτίων ἦκον εἰς τὴν ψυχὴν. Εἰ δὲ ἄρα καὶ ἐκεῖ τὸ νῦν ἀμερῶς ἀκούοιμεν, εἴη ἂν καὶ αὐτὸ σωματικὸν ἐξαίφνης, τοῦτο δὲ ψυχικόν· καὶ διὰ τοῦτο, τοῦτο μὲν ἐξαίφνης, ὅτι νοητὸν τρόπον τινὰ καὶ αἰώνιον, ἐκεῖνο δὲ νῦν, ὡς χρόνου πέρας τοῦ μετροῦντος τὴν σωματοειδῆ γένεσιν.

This sudden is partless by its character and therefore timeless, but that [viz. the now] was a measure and an interval of time as we showed, and that is what [Parmenides] called ‘now’ in order to designate the present time, whereas he called this the ‘sudden’ because it came from unseen and transcendent causes into the soul. If we understood the ‘now’ there as partless, then it would itself be a somatic sudden, that is psychic. And so this is a sudden, because it is in a way intelligible and eternal, whereas that is now, since it is the limit of time that measures corporeal coming to be.⁴³²

The important points for distinguishing between the psychic and the corporeal ‘sudden’ seems to be first the fact that they result from very different causes, and the second their respective kinds of indivisibility. The psychic ‘sudden’, which is a demiurgic and

⁴²⁴ DAMASCIUS, *De Princ*, I 241.23-27, 242.9-15 (= W&C, vol. 3, 1991, p. 38.2-8, p. 38.23-39.8), *In Parm*, 155.6-7, 235.6-17, 267.21-22 (= W&C, vol. 3, 2001, p. 43.19-20, p. 181.7-22, vol. 4, 2003, p. 39.1-2). On the vivifying’s aspect of the soul, see: *In Parm*, 261.28-262.3 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 28.11-16). On the vivifying goddess called ‘Rhea’ by the Orphics and ‘Hecate’ by the Chaldaics who vivifies the demiurgic productions, see: *In Parm*, 149.19-169.5 (= W&C, vol. 3, 2001, p. 34.5-68.16). On Hecate and the ‘sudden’, see: J. COMBÈS, “L’*un humain* selon Damascius”, in *Etudes Néoplatoniciennes*, J. Millon 1996, p. 195. On the importance of the myth of Hecate for the Neoplatonism, see: A. LERNOULD, “De la Lune et d’Hécate dans le mythe du *De facie* de Plutarque et dans le Néoplatonisme tardif”, in A. LERNOULD (ed.), *Plutarque. Le visage qui apparaît dans le disque de la Lune (De facie quae in orbe lunae apparet). Texte grec, traduction, notes et trois études de synthèse*, Septentrion, 2013, p. 117-134

⁴²⁵ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm*, 264.21-265.4 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 33.10-20)

⁴²⁶ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm*, 263.28-30, 264.9-16 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 31.24-32.2, 32.17-33.4)

⁴²⁷ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm*, 267.12-30 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 38.9-39.13)

⁴²⁸ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm*, 263.29-264.9 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 32.1-15)

⁴²⁹ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm*, 263.29 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 31.25-32.1)

⁴³⁰ See also: DAMASCIUS, *In Parm*, 267.19-22 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 38.20-39.2)

⁴³¹ = W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 33.10-20

⁴³² English translation (modified): S. AHBEL-RAPPE, “Damascius on the Third Hypothesis of the *Parmenides*”, in J. D. TURNER, K. CORRIGAN (eds.), *Plato’s Parmenides and its heritage*, vol. 2: *Its Reception in Neoplatonic, Jewish and Christian Texts*, Society of Biblical Literature, 2010, p. 152

vivifying form that gets its dynamism from Hecate-Rhea (viz. the νοῦς ζωογόνος)⁴³³, is caused by the ‘unseen and transcendent causes’, namely it comes into the soul from the Ones of the First and Second Hypotheses⁴³⁴, while the physical ‘sudden’ called νῦν comes from the demiurgic cutting of the complete and integral time (ὁ σύμπαξ χρόνος)⁴³⁵ that subsists into World-Soul and encloses altogether all past, present and future periods as a whole⁴³⁶. That way, the psychic ‘sudden’ is produced both by the hypernegations of the First One and by the assertions of the Second (namely the three diacosms of the Intelligible, Intelligible-Intellective and Intellective)⁴³⁷. If so its production appears to be the same as the constitution of the Third One – the human soul – of which the essential characteristics are so much gifts from the various levels of gods⁴³⁸. Furthermore, Damascius employs a formal criterion to separate the two ‘sudden’. Indeed, on the one hand, the psychic ‘sudden’ is truly indivisible, then it is durationless and, by virtue of this, timeless, whereas, on the other, the physical ‘now’ is not really indivisible but only uncuttable, given that it must have a genuine duration, in such a way that it is only a time-atom but not a partless and sizeless item.

But, in this text, the νῦν is a stretch of time (viz. a time-*quantum*) rather than a durationless switch between two durative phases as seems to be the physical image (εἶδωλον) of the psychic ‘sudden’ in the γένεσις-realm. The usual obscurity of Damascius about such a physical image can be to some extent lightened by considering that this image is itself an intermediary between the durative νῦν and the timeless ἐξαίφνης. With the first, the image shares the fact of being in time and the fact to be a limit, in other words to belong to the becoming, while, with the second, the image shares indivisibility – or at least it has some duration smaller than any duration that can be assigned – and logical neutrality. If it be so, the physical image of the psychic ‘sudden’ is the kinematic image of the dynamic ‘sudden’, in such a way that such an image fills a requisite of the consistency of Damascius’ kinematics that the atomic νῦν would leave unsatisfied – namely, the puzzle of the *weld* between two durative ‘leaps’. Moreover, it is only when the dynamic ‘sudden’ is reflected by its kinematic image that the encosmic assertions and privations are fully and equally denied.

Now, let focus on the dynamic facet of the ‘sudden’. The fact that the psychic ἐξαίφνης must be understood as dynamic rather than kinematic does not only follow from the conflation between the ‘sudden’ and the soul (since I have argued that it was not sufficient for Proclus). Actually, few passages of Damascius show us that Damascius has rather in mind the amalgam of the ‘sudden’ with the dynamic core that remains the same throughout the self-modification of the soul. When he was challenging with the idea of self-motion, Damascius first describes the ‘weird’ nature of the αὐτοκίνητον as the intermediary

⁴³³ DAMASCIUS, *De Princ.* I 241.23-27, 242.9-15 (= W&C, vol. 3, 1991, p. 38.2-8, p. 38.23-39.8), *In Parm.* 155.6-7, 235.6-17, 267.21-22 (= W&C, vol. 3, 2001, p. 43.19-20, p. 181.7-22, vol. 4, 2003, p. 39.1-2)

⁴³⁴ L. G. WESTERINK, J. COMBÈS (eds.), *Damascius. Commentaire sur le Parménide de Platon*, Les Belles Lettres, vol. 4, 2003, p. 33, n. 9 (p. 165-166)

⁴³⁵ SIMPLICIUS, *In Phys.* 775.31-785.11, 798.2-14

⁴³⁶ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm.* 252.18-253.2 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 12.13-13.6). On the ‘Whole Time’, see: P. DUHEM, *Le Système du Monde. Histoire des doctrines cosmologiques de Platon à Copernic*, Hermann, vol. 1, 1913, p. 263-267; M.-C. GALPERINE, “Le temps intégral selon Damascius”, in *Les Etudes philosophiques*, 3, 1980, p. 325-341; P. GOLITSIS, *Les Commentaires de Simplicius et Philopon à la Physique d’Aristote. Tradition et innovation*, de Gruyter, 2008, p. 171-174 and C. STEEL, “The Neoplatonic Doctrine of Time and Eternity and its Influence on Medieval Philosophy”, in P. PORRO (ed.), *The Medieval Concept of Time. Studies on the Scholastic Debate and its Reception in Early Modern Philosophy*, Brill, 2001, p. 12-16

⁴³⁷ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm.* 266.1-9 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 35.11-22)

⁴³⁸ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm.* 260.1-30 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 25.1-26.20)

between the ἀκίνητον and the ἑτεροκίνητον, and, second, identifies the ‘sudden’ with the immobile-part of the self-mover:

In Parm, 263.8-10⁴³⁹: ὥστε καὶ ἀκίνητον κατὰ τὸ αἰώνιον, καὶ ἑτεροκίνητον κατὰ τὸ ἔγχρονον, καὶ αὐτοκίνητον ἄρα κατὰ τὸ σύγκρατον. Ἡ γὰρ κινεῖν, ἀκίνητον, καὶ ἢ κινούμενον, ἑτεροκίνητον, ἢ δὲ τὸ αὐτὸ ἄμφω, αὐτοκίνητον.

So that [the soul] is immobile for its eternity and other-moved for its temporality, and thus self-mover according to the mixture of the two. Indeed, as a mover, it is immobile; as a moved, it is other-moved; and as it is both in its identity, it is self-mover.

In Parm, 265.15-17⁴⁴⁰: Ἔτι δὲ τὸ τρίτον κατὰ μὲν τὴν ιδιότητα τοῦ ἐξαίφνης ἀκίνητός ἐστιν, κατὰ δὲ τὴν γένεσιν αὐτοκίνητος· κατὰ δὲ τὸ σύγκρατον εἶδος, ἀκίνητον ἔχει τὸ αὐτοκίνητον, ὡς καὶ τὸ γενητὸν ἀγένητον.

Moreover, thirdly, the soul is immobile according to the property of its sudden, it is self-mover according to the becoming, and its faculty of self-motion is immobile in its mixed form, just as what is generated in it is also ungenerated.

In Parm, 267.17-19⁴⁴¹: τὸ δὲ “ὡς ἐξ ἐκείνου μεταβάλλον εἰς ἐκάτερον”, ὡς ἐκ τοῦ ὄντος προϊόντος τοῦ γιγνομένου, καὶ ὡς ἐκ τοῦ αἰαιμεταβλήτου τῆς μεταβολῆς γιγνομένης. Ἄμα γὰρ ἀμετάβλητος ἡμῶν ἡ οὐσία καὶ μεταβλητή.

As for the sentence “from which there is a change in one direction or the other”⁴⁴², it is explained by the fact that ‘what is becoming’ proceeds from the being and that change occurs from which is always immutable, because our essence is both immutable and changeable.

The manifold equivalence is blindingly obvious. Damascius makes the following identities:

In Parm, 263.8-10 ἀκίνητον = αἰώνιον = κινεῖν ≈ σύγκρατον

In Parm, 265.15-17 ἀκίνητον = ἐξαίφνης ≈ σύγκρατον εἶδος

In Parm, 267.17-19 ἀμετάβλητον = ὄντος ≈ οὐσία

Thus: ἀκίνητον = ἀμετάβλητον = αἰώνιον = ὄντος = κινεῖν = ἐξαίφνης ≈ σύγκρατον

As I have argued, the metaphor of mixture must be understood καθ’ ἑνδειξιν as approximating the very specificity of intermediary predication in which the opposite strengths are balanced and unified. In the same way, breaking the soul into an invariant core and a changing surface is nothing but a construct of the mind. The only relevant distinction, that I shall analyse in detail further, is the usual Platonic dichotomy between ὑπαρξίς and μέθεξις⁴⁴³. Taking account of this qualification, the psychic ‘sudden’ corresponds to the invariant kernel of the soul, namely its εἶδος τῆς ὑπάρξεως, that is to say its *eternal* mixed form that takes on the *efficient* causation upon the physical world (given that the soul is in itself a ‘real self-mover’ and not only an ‘apparent’ one⁴⁴⁴). Thus, the psychic ‘sudden’ is rightly the *motive force* acting upon the soul itself and its

⁴³⁹ = W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 30.22-26

⁴⁴⁰ = W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 34.17-20

⁴⁴¹ = W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 38.15-19

⁴⁴² PLATO, *Parmenides*, 156d3-4

⁴⁴³ C. STEEL, *The Changing Self. A Study on the Soul in Later Neoplatonism: Iamblichus, Damascius and Priscianus*, Brussel, 1978, p. 109-113. On the ὑπαρξίς that Damascius distinguishes to some extent from the οὐσία, see: DAMASCIUS, *De Princ*, I 310-313 (= W&C, vol. 3, 1991, p. 149.6-154.6)

⁴⁴⁴ DAMASCIUS, *De Princ*, I 28.25-35.6 (= W&C, vol. 1, 1986, p. 42.9-51.14)

subordinated items, in such a way that the ‘sudden’ assumes the psychic causation⁴⁴⁵. In doing so, the temporal passage from a contrary to another proceeds from the ‘sudden’ that prevails over all the soul⁴⁴⁶. It is by means of its ‘sudden’ that the soul, which is in itself a mixture of the opposite predicates, produces the temporal fluctuation of presence and absence, assertion and privation⁴⁴⁷.

The identity of the ‘sudden’ and the psychic invariant kernel involves the following characteristics: in the same way as the intermingled opposite predicates within the psychic kernel are prior to the temporal assertions and privations⁴⁴⁸, the psychic ‘sudden’ in itself precedes them. Of course, the psychic core always remains co-present with itself in the course of the journey of the soul, likewise the ‘sudden’ is always present – evidently in an amphibious way – though the temporal alternation from a contrary to another; albeit the ‘sudden’ can actually be glimpsed in all its splendour only at the durationless transition between two opposite phases, namely only when the psychic sudden is mirrored into the γένεσις-realm by its kinematic image⁴⁴⁹.

What is the dynamic causation of the psychic ‘sudden’ *qua* psychic kernel?

In Parm., 267.19-30⁴⁵⁰: “ἀλλ’ ἡ ἐξαίφνης αὐτὴ φύσις ἄτοπός τις ἐγκάθηται”. Ἄτοπος μὲν ὅτι οὐσία γιγνομένη ἐστὶν ἅμα τε τὰ ἀντικείμενα <καὶ οὐδέτερα>⁴⁵¹, φύσις δὲ ὅτι οὐ πέρας χρόνου, οὐδὲ πέρας τῆς γενέσεως, ἀλλὰ τι εἶδος δημιουργικὸν ἢ ζωογονικόν, ἐγκάθηται δὲ ὅτι τὸ μάλιστα ἰδρυμένον τῆς ψυχῆς, καὶ σταθερὸν καὶ συνεκτικὸν τοῦτο ἐστίν· “καὶ εἰς ταύτην δὲ καὶ ἐκ ταύτης”, ὅτι ἀρχὴ μὲν τῆς προόδου, τέλος δὲ τῆς ἐπιστροφῆς ἢ τοῦ ἐξαίφνης αὐτῇ ιδιότης·

“καὶ τὸ ἐν δὴ εὔπερ ἔστηκέν τε καὶ κινεῖται, μεταβάλλοι ἂν ἐφ’ ἐκάτερα· μόνως γὰρ ἂν οὕτως ἀμφοτέρω ποιῶι.” Εἰ ἄρα κινεῖται, καὶ ἔστηκεν ἅμα ἀμφοτέρω· διότι ἔσχατόν ἐστιν ἔν, καὶ ποτὲ γιγνόμενον, ποτὲ ἀπολλύμενον, κατὰ μεταβολήν, δηλονότι τῆς ἐπικρατοῦσης ἕξεως ἢ μεριστῆς ἢ ἀμερίστου. Συνάγει δὲ ἐκάτερον τὸ ἐξαίφνης, καὶ τῇ μεταβολῇ τὸ ἀμετάβλητον ἐγκίρνησιν·

“But this sudden, as a weird nature, is [firmly] seated”⁴⁵². “Weird”, because it is essence that becomes both opposites <and neither>; “nature”, because [unlike the durative *vōn*] it is not a limit of time, nor a limit of becoming, but a certain demiurgic and vivifying form; and it is “[firmly] seated”, because it is the most solid, the most stable and cohesive foundation of the soul; and [Parmenides] adds: “it is the point arrival and the point of departure”⁴⁵³, because this property of the sudden is both the beginning of the procession and the end of the reversion.

“Then the one, if it is at rest and in motion, must change in each direction; for that is the only way in which it can do both”⁴⁵⁴. If, therefore, it is moving and resting, it is both at once; this is why it is the very last One [viz. the Third], sometimes nascent, sometimes perishing, obviously in agreement with the change of the foremost state, viz. of the divisible or the indivisible. The sudden gathers one and the other, and it mixes immutable with change.

⁴⁴⁵ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm.*, 267.12-30 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 38.9-39.13). On this point, see: J. TROUILLARD, “La notion de δύναμις chez Damascios”, in *Revue des Etudes Grecques*, 85, fasc. 406-408, 1972, p. 353-363, especially, p. 360 and p. 363

⁴⁴⁶ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm.*, 267.14-19 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 38.12-19)

⁴⁴⁷ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm.*, 250.25-251.5 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 9.11-28)

⁴⁴⁸ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm.*, 251.15-18 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 10.14-18)

⁴⁴⁹ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm.*, 264.17-20 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 33.5-9)

⁴⁵⁰ = W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 38.20-39.13

⁴⁵¹ L. G. WESTERINK, J. COMBÈS (eds.), *Damascius. Commentaire sur le Parménide de Platon*, Les Belles Lettres, vol. 4, 2003, p. 83, n. 7 (p. 168)

⁴⁵² PLATO, *Parmenides*, 156d6-7

⁴⁵³ PLATO, *Parmenides*, 156e1

⁴⁵⁴ PLATO, *Parmenides*, 156e3-5

The ‘sudden’ *qua* psychic kernel – namely the cohesive and vivifying principle of the soul – carries out reversion and procession⁴⁵⁵, inasmuch as it is the junction point between these alternated processes that alternatively unify or scatter the soul. In short, to use the Neoplatonic metaphor of the soul as a pilot of the bodily vessel⁴⁵⁶, the ‘sudden’ is the pilot in charge of the direction of the efficient power of the soul toward the higher or the lower levels of the ontic hierarchy⁴⁵⁷. In doing so, the ‘sudden’ is thereby in charge of the self-modification of the soul⁴⁵⁸. Moreover, as the pilot of a ship, the ‘sudden’ within the soul also moves upwards and downwards with the ‘container’ that it steers and by which it is dragged away through the ontic spectrum. Thus, since the ‘sudden’ steers the soul, Abbel-Rappe⁴⁵⁹ is right to close together the psychic kernel of the commentary on the *Parmenides* and the ‘faculty of awareness’ (τὸ προσεκτικόν) of the lectures on the *Phaedo*⁴⁶⁰.

The modalities of the psychic causation are exhibited as follows:

In Parm., 271.8-24⁴⁶¹: Αὐτὴ μέντοι ἄγει ἑαυτὴν πρὸς ἐκάστην ἀλλοίωσιν τε καὶ μέθεξιν· πάντα γὰρ οὖσα, πάντων βούλεται μετέχειν· καὶ ἡ μὲν ἐστὶν ἡ αὐτὴ κατὰ ἀριθμόν, ἡ δὲ μετέχει ἄλλοτε ἄλλοια, ἀλλοιοῦσα δὲ ἑαυτὴν ἐνεργεῖ ἐνεργείας ἀπὸ τῆς οὐσίας προβαλλομένης, καὶ εἰς αὐτὴν ἀναστρεφούσας, τοῦτο μὲν ὅτι ἀλλοιώσει πῶς αὐτὴν πρὸς τάδε μᾶλλον ἢ τάδε ἀποκλίνουσαι, ἐκεῖνο δὲ ὡς ἀπὸ ἀμεταβλήτου μεταβαλλομένη. Μᾶλλον δὲ προβάλλονται μὲν ὡς ἀπὸ οὐσίας ἀμεταβλήτου, μεταβάλλονται δὲ ὡς ἀπὸ μεταβλητῆς. Ἐνδοθεν γὰρ ἡ ἀλλοίωσις ἄρχεται, καὶ κατὰ ταύτην αἱ μεταβαλλόμεναι συνίστανται ἐνέργειαι. Πάσχουσα γὰρ ἡ οὐσία τάδε τοιάσδε ἐνεργείας ἀφίησιν, καὶ πάλιν συναλλοιοῦται ταῖς ἐνεργείαις. Εἰσὶ δὲ αἱ τῶν ἐνεργειῶν ἀκίνητοι, εἰσὶν αἱ τῇ ἀναλλοιώτῳ οὐσίᾳ συμπεπηγυῖαι, αἱ γεννητικαὶ τῶν ἄλλων τῷ ἄγοντι ἄνω ἢ κάτω τὴν ψυχὴν. Πέφυκεν ἄρα δι’ ἑαυτὴν καὶ ἐνοῦσθαι, οἷον στομουμένη ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ φωτός, καὶ πληθύνεσθαι ἀποβάλλουσα τὴν στόμωσιν, καὶ μένουσα ὃ ἦν καθ’ ἑαυτὴν, μᾶλλον δὲ πάσχουσα τι καὶ ὑπὸ τοῦ χειρόνος. Ἄρα οὖν τὸ μένον, ὅπερ ἐστὶ τὸ ἐξαίφνης, καταδεέστερον τῆς πρὸς τὸ ἄνω γενέσεως· ἢ οὐ χωριστείον ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀχρόνου.

It is indeed the soul that drives itself towards every modification and participation. Being in itself everything, it wants to participate in everything; and, as it is, it remains numerically the same; insofar as it participates, it is sometimes modified in one way, sometimes in another. By modifying itself, it produces activities that are projected from its essence and that return to it: inasmuch as the activities modify the soul in some respects by making it incline towards these things rather than others; this, in such a way that the activities are changed as from the immutable. Or rather, its activities are projected as from an immutable essence, but they are changed as from a changing essence. Change begins, indeed, from within, and changing activities are formed in accordance with this change. In fact, essence produces activities of a certain kind because it undergoes affections of this kind, and, in turn, it is modified at the same time by these activities. But, among the activities, there are those that are immobile, namely those that are one with the immutable essence, those that generate other activities by driving the soul up or down. The soul is thus able by itself to unify (for example, by being hardened by the divine light) and to pluralize itself (by losing its

⁴⁵⁵ See also: DAMASCIUS, *In Parm.*, 249.27-29 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 8.1-3)

⁴⁵⁶ PLOTINUS, *Enneads*, III 4 [15], 6.48, IV 3 [27], 17.22-28, 21.3-11

⁴⁵⁷ For the metaphor of the soul as ship moving from within, see: DAMASCIUS, *In Parm.*, 253 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 14.17-19) in which the Neoplatonist alludes to Ps.-PLATO, *Critias*, 109c2 (on the authorship of this dialogue, see: Th. AUFFRET, M. RASHED, “On the Inauthenticity of the *Critias*”, in *Phronesis*, 62, 2017, p. 237-254. They propose to attribute the *Critias* to Speusippus or his circle in virtue of the parallel between *Critias*, 121a and THEOPHRASTUS, *Metaphysics*, 11a18-25)

⁴⁵⁸ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm.*, 272.18-22 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 48.12-18)

⁴⁵⁹ S. ABHEL-RAPPE, “Damascius on the Third Hypothesis of the *Parmenides*”, in J. D. TURNER, K. CORRIGAN (eds.), *Plato’s Parmenides and its heritage, vol. 2: Its Reception in Neoplatonic, Jewish and Christian Texts*, Society of Biblical Literature, 2010, p. 154-156

⁴⁶⁰ DAMASCIUS, *In Phaed.*, I §269, §271, II §19, §21

⁴⁶¹ = W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 46.3-47.1

καὶ αὐτὸ γὰρ τὸ ἐξαίφνης ποτὲ μὲν ῥώννυται,
ποτὲ δὲ ἀμυδρῶνται.

hardening and remaining what it is in itself, or rather undergoing some attack on the part of the inferior). Is it that what remains, viz. the sudden, is inferior to the ascending movement? We answer that we must not separate it from the timeless; indeed, the sudden, too, sometimes strengthens, sometimes weakens, because the soul, in its entirety, at the same time remains what it is and changes about as well.

The psychic activities predictably come from the psychic ‘sudden’ insofar as it is the most immutable and most timeless ‘part’ of the soul which has within itself all the temporal predicates, albeit only in gestation⁴⁶² (given that it has within itself all the predicates, even both-together (συναμφοτέρον) the two predicates of each opposite pair, in a paradigmatic way). This text clarifies how varying activities can proceed from the same seed, and, reversely, how the various activities lead to the self-modification of the soul. Such reciprocity brings out the function of supervenience for the consistency of any Neoplatonic theory, notably because the supervenience guarantees the *continuity* of the vertical causal chain from the highest to the lowest levels of the ontic scale.

Beyond the self-modification, the mechanism of the psychic causation is as follows: the activities of the soul are directly reflected into the physical world by the changes of its primary vehicle which is a luminous body more or less warmly dressed⁴⁶³. Such a translation from the ‘psychic’ to the ‘vehicular’ explains the frequent use of the analogy between them in the course of Damascius’ explanation⁴⁶⁴. The psychic causation thereby is relayed from the dynamic kernel to the bodily diacosm by means of a chain that includes incorporeal and corporeal activities:

ψυχή → αὐγοειδές ὄχημα → σῶμα

This scheme is obviously a common view of Later Neoplatonism. The innovation (or the renovation) of Damascius takes place only in his understanding of the link between the essence of the soul and its activity, namely in the fact that, unlike Syrianus’ students, Damascius claims the validity of the Law of Supervenience for the souls which peregrinate throughout the scale of beings, and sustains it by a very technical framework. Porphyry had been very close to making this move, but, unlike Iamblichus⁴⁶⁵, some scruple connected with the dignity of the soul had prevented it⁴⁶⁶. What is this Law of Supervenience?

The activity proceeds from the essence and, by virtue of this, the activity necessarily is similar to the substance from which it originates, in such a way that if the substance is φ, its activities will also be φ. Conversely, if the activities are of some determined kind, that is because its substance is such. In short, a thing cannot differ in respect to its activities

⁴⁶² DAMASCIUS, *In Parm*, 272.3-14 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 47.15-48.8)

⁴⁶³ On the various kinds of vehicles in the Later Neoplatonism, see: I. HADOT, *Le problème du néoplatonisme alexandrin: Hiéroclès et Simplicius*, Etudes Augustiniennes, 1978, p. 181-187

⁴⁶⁴ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm*, 253.11-19, 255.8-15, 270.2-6 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 13.20-14.7, 17.4-10, 43.22-44.6). C. STEEL, *The Changing Self. A Study on the Soul in Later Neoplatonism: Iamblichus, Damascius and Priscianus*, Brussel, 1978, p. 96-97

⁴⁶⁵ IAMBlichus, in (Ps.-)SIMPLICIUS, *In DA*, 89.33-35 (see also: PRISCIANUS, *Metaphr*, 31.27-32)

⁴⁶⁶ PORPHYRY, *Against Boethus on the Soul*, in EUSEBIUS, *Praeparatio Evangelica*, XI 28.4-5. See: I. HADOT (ed.), *Simplicius. Commentaire sur le Manuel d’Epictète*, Brill, 1996, p. 106-107

without differing with respect to its substance, given that the activities ontologically depend upon the substantial properties of which they are the expression. This Law of Supervenience according to which the activities supervene upon the substance is universal and plays at any level of the ontic hierarchy⁴⁶⁷, and therefore must be applied to the ‘regional’ relation between the soul and its activities. That is precisely one of the main reasons for which Damascius deviates from Proclus and follows Iamblichus on the changing self, since the variation of the psychic οὐσιώδης μέθεξις can be inferred from the varying activities of the soul.

The relative likeness (ὁμοιότης) between the cause and its effects, expressed by the Law of Supervenience, ensures the connection of each diacosm with that which precedes it and that which follows it. By this, such a multi-layered likeness justifies the intellectual undertaking of rising to the Principles⁴⁶⁸, because from the empirical observation of certain properties at the encosmic level, it is possible to go up the scale of beings, step by step, until their most transcendent roots – including, by the use of hypernegation, beyond the discursive speech, until the Ineffable. In denying the validity of the supervenience for the ‘regional’ relation between the soul and its activities, Proclus runs the risk of shaking the consistency of the Neoplatonic theory, and of breaking the continuity of the causal chain that brings together all diacosmic levels. Indeed, whether the Law of Supervenience were not universal, then how the Neoplatonists would justify their multi-layered theology of which the construction by procession highly depends on the relative likeness between the diacosms? To preserve the consistency of Neoplatonism, Damascius must therefore diverge from Proclus – who introduces a ‘regional’ gap into the processive continuum – and claim the universality of the Supervenience, in such a way that even the essence of the soul is changeable, insofar as the activities which proceed from it are variable. That way, the procession can be understood, without any trouble, as a continuum resulting from the interplay of similarity and dissimilarity between the causes and their effects, so, as a chain that unifies the ontic hierarchy from an absolute singular principle to a manifold of particulars.

The reciprocity involved by the supervenience is well depicted by the model of ἀλλοίωσις that Damascius favours for clarifying the self-motion⁴⁶⁹. Indeed, saying that the

⁴⁶⁷ DAMASCIUS, *De Princ.* I 31.2-10 (= W&C, vol. 1, 1986, p. 45.5-14). On Damascius’ law of causality *qua* involving a kind of supervenience between causes and their effects, see: S. AHBEL-RAPPE, “Scepticism in the Sixth Century? Damascius’ *Doubts and Solutions Concerning First Principles*”, in *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 36, 1998, p. 356-360 and S. GERTZ, “Knowledge, Intellect and Being in Damascius’ *Doubts and Solutions Concerning First Principles*”, in *Ancient Philosophy*, 36-2, 2016, p. 479-494

⁴⁶⁸ For instance, see: PROCLUS, *Elements of Theology*, §28-29, §32

⁴⁶⁹ Here, I take the opposite view of Steel who thinks that Damascius’ use of terms which indicate qualitative change is an unfortunate consequence of the fact that Damascius is “limited by the conceptual apparatus provided him by his tradition” (C. STEEL, *The Changing Self. A Study on the Soul in Later Neoplatonism: Iamblichus, Damascius and Priscianus*, Brussel, 1978, p. 116). Quite the reverse, I think the Neoplatonists are perfectly aware of the benefits provided by the Platonic porosity between the categories of substance and quality involved by the ‘categorical modulation’ occurring in the relation of participation. Yet, it seems that all Neoplatonist had forgotten the mediatory role of the μάθηματα in the ‘categorical modulation’. On these intermediaries, see: ARISTOTLE, *Met.* A 6 987b14-33; Ph. MERLAN, *From Platonism to Neoplatonism*, Martinus Nijhoff, 1968, p. 11-58 and M. RASHED, “Plato’s Five Worlds Hypothesis (Ti. 55cd), Mathematics and Universals”, in R. CHIARADONNA, G. GALLUZO (eds.), *Universals in Ancient Philosophy*, Edizioni della Normale, 2013, p. 87-112. Anyway, as Cook Wilson and – after him – Armstrong have lucidly remarked, the puzzle of *how* occurs the participation is condemned to remain insoluble, insofar such a nexus is *in fine* a primitive of the theory: D. M. ARMSTRONG, *Universals and Scientific Realism. Vol. 1: Nominalism and Realism*, Cambridge University Press, 1978, p. 66-68, p. 104-105, *Universals. An Opinionated Introduction*, Westview

soul alters or modifies itself seems naturally to put us in mind the idea of a variation of the very being of the soul itself under the influence of its own activity. Besides, the well-known porosity between *qualitative* change and *substantial* change⁴⁷⁰ allows to switch from the ἀλλοιώσις *qua* γένεσις τις to the γένεσις ἀπλή, or vice versa, without great trouble. This move is especially easy for a Platonist, insofar as such a confusion is already ascribed to Plato in the case of the Forms of which the sensible participates⁴⁷¹. Indeed, Plato had supported the view according to which the μέθεξις involves a sort of ‘categorical modulation’ from the category of substance to the category of quality, namely from the Ideas in themselves (= substances/τοῦτο) to the Ideas as participated by the sensible items (= qualities/τοιούτων)⁴⁷². Thus, the fact that Damascius claims that what is changing into the soul is its οὐσιώδης μέθεξις (i.e. its τοιόνδε τῆς οὐσίας⁴⁷³) is far to be a *Platonistic* coincidence⁴⁷⁴, insofar as it is not its least merit to justify the use of the lexicon of qualitative change. Of course, such a porosity might be highly tempered by the distinction between ἀλλοιώσις and τροπή presented above. However, inasmuch as the Neoplatonic substitution of the coming-to-be (γένεσις) by the transformation (τροπή) clearly corresponds to a transfer of the essential change from the category of substance to the category of quality⁴⁷⁵, this late distinction actually supports the view of Damascius.

Damascius thereby characterizes the products of the essential modifications as *essential dispositions* (διαθέσεις/ἔξεις) which determine the path toward the completion (τελείωσις) of the soul, viz. its unification⁴⁷⁶. The quality called διάθεσις is very linked to the idea of

Press, 1989, p. 108-110, p. 137 and J. COOK WILSON, *Statement and Inference*, Oxford University Press, 1926, p. 348

⁴⁷⁰ ARISTOTLE, *GC*, I 3-4. In this text, ‘alteration’ means more generally ‘qualitative change’ rather than strictly ‘change in affections’ (as ἀλλοίωσις means in *Cat*, 14 15a15-33, *Phys*, 7.3 and *Met*, Δ 21 1022b15-20). Indeed, the examples of quality used by Aristotle are not, strictly speaking, πάθη (see: 319b12-14, 25-29, 33). On the porosity between qualitative change and substantial change in Aristotle, see: *Met*, Z 8 1033b21-24, 1034a5-8 and, above all, *Meteor*, 4.2 379b17-32. On this point, see: F. MARION, *Etude sur les notions de διάθεσις et d’ἔξις chez Aristote*, Sorbonne University-Paris IV, 2015 (MPhil Thesis), chap. V, §20

⁴⁷¹ ARISTOTLE, *Met*, Z 6 1031b15-18, 13 1038b15-29, *SE*, 22 178b36-179a10. See: F. MARION, *Etude sur les notions de διάθεσις et d’ἔξις chez Aristote*, Sorbonne University-Paris IV, 2015 (MPhil Thesis), chap. V, §17

⁴⁷² PLATO, *Timaeus*, 49d-50b, 52e-53a (see: S. MENN, *The Aim and The Argument of Aristotle’s Metaphysics*, Iβ4 (esp. Iβ4b), forthcoming). Besides, some Platonists, as Plotinus or Porphyry, had emphasized such a ‘categorical modulation’ with their theory of the individual *qua* συνδρομή ποιότητων that originates from *Theaetetus*, 157b-c, 209c and, as Lloyd has wonderfully seen, anticipates the sophisticated theory of individual of Quine’s *Mathematical Logic*, see: ALCINOUS, *The Handbook of Platonism*, 156.1-14; PLOTINUS, *Enneads*, VI 3 [44], 8; PORPHYRY, *Isagoge*, 7.20-26, *In Cat*, 129.8-11 and DEXIPPUS, *In Cat*, 30.20-26. On this point: R. CHIARADONNA, “La teoria dell’individuo in Porfirio e l’idiōs poion stoico”, in *Elenchos*, 21, 2000, p. 303-331; A.C. LLOYD, “Neoplatonic Logic and Aristotelian Logic II”, in *Phronesis*, 1-2, 1956, p. 158-159 and R. SORABJI, *Self. Ancient and Modern Insights about Individuality, Life and Death*, Oxford Clarendon Press, 2006, p. 137-142

⁴⁷³ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm*, 255.26 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 18.3-4)

⁴⁷⁴ The loss of Damascius’ commentary on the First Part of the *Parmenides* is, of course, highly regrettable for our understanding of Damascius’ account on participation. However, there remains a brief analysis in the *De Principiis*, see: DAMASCIUS, *De Princ*, II 1.4-4.8 (= W&C, vol. 3, 1991, p. 168.1-173.5)

⁴⁷⁵ M. RASHED, “La classification des lignes simples selon Proclus et sa transmission au monde islamique”, in C. D’ANCONA, G. SERRA (eds.), *Aristotele e Alessandro di Afrodisia nella tradizione araba. Atti del colloquio ‘La ricezione araba ed ebraica della filosofia e della scienza greche’ (Padova, 14-15 maggio 1999)*, Padoue, 2002, p. 257-279

⁴⁷⁶ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm*, 272.29-273.9 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 49.1-18) (see also: 272.6 and, for ἔξις, 267.28). See: C. STEEL, *The Changing Self. A Study on the Soul in Later*

mixture since its Hippocratic origin in which διάθεσις means the healthy or sickly humoral balance⁴⁷⁷. That is in this meaning of ‘corporeal balance’ that, for instance, Aristotle sometimes uses it in his biological treatises⁴⁷⁸. This link between διάθεσις and mixture is also present in Plato who sometimes speaks about the psychic mixture⁴⁷⁹. Anyway, in the book Δ of the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle defines the διάθεσις as the ordered arrangement of that which has parts⁴⁸⁰, and such is any mixture. In making appeal to these qualities that implicitly allude to the mixture, Damascius highlights once more the *unified* being of the soul. More important, among the four kinds of qualities presented in *Cat*, 8, he chooses one of which the production is closest to *substantial* change. Indeed, in *Phys*, 7.3⁴⁸¹, Aristotle has described the coming-to-be of the qualities that are not affective on the model of the γένεσις, namely on the model of a *derivative* production that succeeds some preparatory alterations (in the strict sense of *affective* change)⁴⁸². This process is very similar to the coming of the Forms into the sensible world that follows a preliminary

Neoplatonism: Iamblichus, Damascius and Priscianus, Brussel, 1978, p. 113-114. For these notions, see also: ALEXANDER OF APHRODISIAS, *DA*, 24.21-25.2. The proximity between the two loaded words διάθεσις and τελείωσις is far from being a bland textual fact. It carries a high Alexander’s overtone (rather than an Aristotle’s one), insofar as διάθεσις is often used as a metonymy of ἔξις, see for these notions and the function of such a metonymy in Aristotle: F. MARION, *Etude sur les notions de διάθεσις et d’ἔξις chez Aristote*, Sorbonne University-Paris IV, 2015 (MPhil Thesis), and, for these in Alexander of Aphrodisias: C. CERAMI, “Changer pour rester le même. Forme, δύναμις et ἔξις chez Alexandre d’Aphrodise”, in A. BALANSARD, A. JAULIN (eds.), *Alexandre d’Aphrodise et la métaphysique aristotélicienne*, Peeters, 2018, p. 237-280. Simplicius follows his master by identifying the essential participation with the notion of ἔξις, see: SIMPLICIUS, *In Phys*, 1066.3-1067.2 and I. HADOT (ed.), *Simplicius. Commentaire sur le Manuel d’Epictète*, Brill, 1996, p. 80-83

⁴⁷⁷ Ps.-HIPPOCRATES, *On Ancient Medicine*, 6.2, 7.2, *On the Eighth Month’s Foetus*, 12.1, *On Aliment*, 34 (see also for ἔξις: *Regimen in Health*, I 32.1, III 81.3, 82.3, *On Regimen in Acute Diseases*, 25.1, 43.1, Appendix, 6.1, 31.2, 57.1) and Ps.-GALEN, *Introductio sive Medicus*, 680.1-8. For a Neoplatonic text that refers to the Hippocratic use, see amongst others: SIMPLICIUS, *In Epict. Ench*, 14.332-335

⁴⁷⁸ For example: ARISTOTLE, *Phys*, 7.3 246b4-6, *GA*, IV 2 767a32-33

⁴⁷⁹ For example: PLATO, *Philebus*, 64c

⁴⁸⁰ ARISTOTLE, *Met*, Δ 19 1022b1-3

⁴⁸¹ On this difficult and fascinating text (of which theory never explicitly appears elsewhere in the *Corpus Aristotelicum*, except in *DC*, 1.3 270a27-29), see: SIMPLICIUS, *In Phys*, 1061.25-1081.30; S. MASO, C. NATALI, G. SEEL (eds.), *Reading Aristotle Physics VII.3 “What is Alteration?”*, Parmenides Publishing, 2012 and R. WARDY, *The Chain of Change. A Study of Aristotle’s Physics VII*, Cambridge University Press, 1990, p. 152-238. *Phys*, 7.3 is a key-text for the question of whether or not a kind of supervenience is admitted by Aristotle (debate initiated by R. WARDY, p. 202-207), see: V. CASTON, “Aristotle and Supervenience”, in *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*, 31-2, 1993, p. 107-135, “Epiphenomenalisms, Ancient and Modern”, in *The Philosophical Review*, 106-3, 1997, p. 309-363; H. GRANGER, “Aristotle and the Concept of Supervenience”, in *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*, 31-2, 1993, p. 161-177; Ch. SCHIELDS, “Soul and Body in Aristotle”, in *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, 6, 1988, p. 103-137, “The Generation of Form in Aristotle”, in *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, 7-4, 1990, p. 367-390 and I. KUPREEVA, *Alexander of Aphrodisias on Soul as Form*, University of Toronto, 1999 (PhD Thesis), p. 272-285

⁴⁸² There is in Aristotle a well-known porosity between a kind of γένεσις τις and γένεσις ἀπλῆ, namely between the change in respect to privation (or in respect to τελείωσις-ἔκστασις in the case of the dispositions, according to *Phys*, 7.3 246b1-3, 247a1-3) and the change in respect to contradiction (see: *Phys*, 1.7 189b30-190a31, *Met*, Z 7 1033a8-16, 8 1033a24-b1), albeit only the last is a genuine *substantial* change (*Phys*, 1.7 190a21-b10, 5.1 225a12-17, *GC* 1.2 317a17-3 317b35, 319a3-14). To some extent, such a conflation can be explained by the likeness of these two relations (*Met*, I 4 1055b3-9).

overcoming of the material barriers that might prevent its reception⁴⁸³. The parallel is blindingly obvious, and can legitimate the association of μέθεξις and διάθεσις that puts the emphasis on the categorial porosity involved by the participation⁴⁸⁴.

Moreover, Damascius has surely in mind the Aristotelian definition of ἕξις according to which it means ‘a disposition according to which that which is disposed is either well or ill disposed, either in itself or with reference to something else’⁴⁸⁵, like are virtue and vice⁴⁸⁶. The *ethical* overtone of these sorts of qualities⁴⁸⁷ is highly relevant for characterizing the essence of the soul that undergoes change in the course of its purifying ascent toward the Intelligible, or quite the reverse in the course of its corrupting fall toward the matter⁴⁸⁸. So, the fact that Damascius precisely uses the term διάθεσις for denoting the changing quality of the psychic essence is undoubtedly well thought out, insofar as, given its semantic wealth and its great power of evocation, it provides a satisfying clarification of his theory: modifying the intensity of one of the opposing predicates present within itself, the soul changes its *predicative balance*, namely its disposition, and, therefore, projects varying activity from itself towards itself and, by means of the ‘vehicular reflection’, from itself towards the physical world. That way, the soul modifies itself, given that its activity has the retrograde effect of changing its predicative balance again, and so on and so forth. For instance, when the soul plunges into the sensible world more deeply, its ‘one’ is relaxing while its ‘many’ is strengthening, in such a way that the balance between ‘one’ and ‘many’ changes in favour of the ‘many’. Since the soul is always active and in motion (ἀεικίνητος), it continuously modifies itself, in such a way that the soul is an ever-changing οὐσία (ἀειμετάβλητος, ἀειγένητος)⁴⁸⁹. Yet, the fact that the soul is essentially disposed (διατιθέμενον) differently at different times does not entirely shake its being to the extent that it would be no longer what it is. In spite of the increase and decrease of the various predicative strengths within itself, the soul keeps its identity throughout change.

Indeed, while the essence-οὐσία of the soul is changeable in respect to its variable οὐσιώδης μέθεξις, Damascius forcefully argues that it is not the case for its εἶδος τῆς ὑπάρξεως. Albeit the terms οὐσία and ὑπαρξις (and, sometimes, ὑπόστασις) are often interchangeable in Damascius, he had nevertheless distinguished their precise meanings and imposed a twist to the earlier Neoplatonic tradition⁴⁹⁰. In short, ὑπαρξις means the first principle of every determined being – principle which is anterior to all participation. The ὑπαρξις subsequently plays the role of the kernel around which the substance grows according to its essential participation. In other words, ὑπαρξις denotes the pure being that fulfils the henadic function of foundation for the whole structure of the essence, in such a way that the οὐσία *in fine* results from the qualification of the ὑπαρξις by the diverse essential participation (it must be noted that such a constitution does not perfectly cross-

⁴⁸³ DAMASCIUS, *In Phil*, 135.1-136.4

⁴⁸⁴ Furthermore, these two processes are both durationless (see: *Phys*, 6.5 236a5-7).

⁴⁸⁵ ARISTOTLE, *Met*, Δ 20 1022b10-12 (that refers to Δ 14 1020b19-23 and *NE*, 2.4 1105b25-28)

⁴⁸⁶ On the virtue *qua* ἕξις, see: ARISTOTLE, *EE*, 2.2, *NE*, 2.4-6

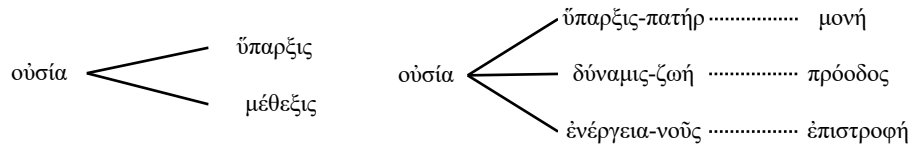
⁴⁸⁷ This *ethical* overtone of διάθεσις and ἕξις is quite vivid in Aristotle. Almost the half of their occurrences are found in the ethical and political treatises of Aristotle (221/435), in such a way that the scholars have been focused on the ἕξις *qua* virtue. See: M. OELE, “Passive Dispositions: On the Relationship between πάθος and ἕξις in Aristotle”, in *Ancient Philosophy*, 32-2, 2013, p. 351-368

⁴⁸⁸ For the virtue *qua* essential participation, see: DAMASCIUS, *In Parm*, 256.4-25 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 18-19). See also: SIMPLICIUS, *In Epict. Ench*, 1.332-342

⁴⁸⁹ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm*, 263.12-14, 265.12-18 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 30.27-31.4, 34.12-14)

⁴⁹⁰ On these notions in Damascius, see: J. COMBÈS, “*Hyparxis* et *Hypostasis* chez Damascius”, in *Etudes Néoplatoniciennes*, J. Millon 1996, p. 327-349

check the Chaldaic-triadic combination that products the οὐσία *qua* nature which is, has some power and acts)⁴⁹¹.



That way, the fact that the psychic οὐσιώδης μέθεξις varies over time is enough for claiming that the soul *qua* οὐσία undergoes change, and this without entirely denied its identity⁴⁹². Moreover, the fact that the essence of the soul results from the conjunction of its ὑπαρξίς and its οὐσιώδης μέθεξις emphasizes once more the porosity between *substantial* and *qualitative* change inherent in the ‘categorical modulation’, given that the essential participation is a genuine ‘component’ of the οὐσία. Damascius’ subtle explanation of the modification of the soul by means of the distinction between ὑπαρξίς and μέθεξις has also the merit to highlight the intermediary nature of the soul again⁴⁹³:

	ὑπαρξίς	μέθεξις
νοῦς	unchangeable	unchangeable
ψυχή	unchangeable	changing
σῶμα	changing	changing

As for the reason for why the psychic ὑπαρξίς is really immutable, it must be found in its *henadic function*, that is to say its function of *unification* and of *conservation of unity*⁴⁹⁴. Indeed, inasmuch as the soul of the Third Hypothesis is the last One, namely the ἀνθρώπειον ἓν, its very being is determined by the structure of its unity. Consequently, whether this structure (εἶδος) can be lost, then the fact to be a soul can be lost too, and, therefore, the soul cannot travel along the ontic hierarchy and cannot express the virtualities of its intermediary being without vanishing. To escape such an unpleasant conclusion, the psychic structure of unity – and such is its εἶδος τῆς ὑπάρξεως – must be conceived as unchangeable. That way, the Platonic dogma of the immortality of the mediatory soul can be saved, whereas the freedom of the soul indicated by its varying

⁴⁹¹ DAMASCIUS, *De Princ.* I 106.18-25, 131.12-133.19, 135.19-22, 310.13-313.21 (= W&C, vol. 2, 1989, p. 33.4-12, p. 70.19-73.23, 76.22-77.1, vol. 3, 1991, p. 149.6-154.14). Above all, see: P. HADOT, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, Etudes Augustiniennes, vol. 1, 1968, p. 260-272 (especially, p. 267-270), p. 489, and afterwards: C. STEEL, *The Changing Self. A Study on the Soul in Later Neoplatonism: Iamblichus, Damascius and Priscianus*, Brussel, 1978, p. 113, n. 78; F. ROMANO (ed.), *Proclo. Lezioni sul ‘Cratilo’ di Platone*, Roma, 1989, p. 136 and L. G. WESTERINK, J. COMBÈS (eds.), *Damascius. Traité des Premiers Principes*, Les Belles Lettres, vol. 2, 1989, p. 33, n. 2 (p. 233-234). On the correspondance between the triads ὑπαρξίς-δύναμις-ἐνέργεια/νοῦς and μονή-πρόοδος-ἐπιστροφή, see: DAMASCIUS, *In Parm.* 135.9-15 (= W&C, vol. 3, 2001, p. 9.20-10.4) and P. HADOT, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, Etudes Augustiniennes, vol. 1, 1968, p. 272-330. On the Chaldaic-triadic constitution of any genuine substance in Damascius, see in addition to Hadot: J. M. DILLON, “Some Aspects of Damascius’ Treatment of the Concept of *Dynamis*”, in F. ROMANO, R. LOREDANA CARDULLO (eds.), *Dynamis nel Neoplatonismo. Atti del II Colloquio Internazionale del Centro di Ricerca sul Neoplatonismo (6-8 October 1994)*, Nuova Italia Editrice, 1996, p. 139-148

⁴⁹² C. STEEL, *The Changing Self. A Study on the Soul in Later Neoplatonism: Iamblichus, Damascius and Priscianus*, Brussel, 1978, p. 109-113

⁴⁹³ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm.* 271.25-29 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 47.2-7). C. STEEL, *The Changing Self. A Study on the Soul in Later Neoplatonism: Iamblichus, Damascius and Priscianus*, Brussel, 1978, p. 111-112

⁴⁹⁴ DAMASCIUS, *De Princ.* I 69.21-70.11 (= W&C, vol. 1, 1986, p. 104.21-105.20)

activity – and thereby its responsibility for its fall into the corrupted world⁴⁹⁵ – can be explained by its changing essential participation only, in accordance with the Law of Supervenience.

The ἐξαίφνης *qua* ὑπαρξίς is therefore the radical foundation (θεμέλιον) of the soul, its principle of existence (ὑπόστασις), which inherits its dynamic power from the vivifying Intellect⁴⁹⁶ (Hecate-Rhea) from which the *moving life* (Hera) and the *resting life* (Hestia) originally proceed⁴⁹⁷. The ‘sudden’ shares some characteristics with the νοῦς ζωογόνος of the 2nd Order of the Intellective Diacosm, insofar as Hecate is the source of the psychic vivifying form. For instance, on the one hand, in the same way as Hecate is both-together in motion and at rest⁴⁹⁸, the psychic ‘sudden’ has within itself all opposite predicates; on the other, the vivifying Intellect⁴⁹⁹ and the ‘sudden’ are in their respective diacosms the analogous of the First Eternity of the Intelligible Life belonging to the 2nd Triad of the Intelligible Diacosm⁵⁰⁰. Furthermore, insofar as the ὑπαρξίς is a gift of the Father (that of the Chaldaic Triad corresponding to the Intelligible Diacosm)⁵⁰¹, the psychic ‘sudden’ keeps somewhat of the Fathered Act, namely its dynamism. Thus, it is *qua* ὑπαρξίς that the psychic ‘sudden’ takes on the *efficient* causation of the soul upon itself and upon the physical world, given that its *motive force* is inherited from the higher diacosms. As a junction between the highest and the lowest levels of reality, the souls, by means of their intrinsic dynamism, are in charge of the transmission and of the conservation of the encosmic life, in doing so they take part in the organization of the sensible world *qua* assistants of the Vivifying Goddess and of the Demiurge⁵⁰².

Damascius, the last ring of the golden chain⁵⁰³, surely was – of course after Plotinus – the most combative Platonizer, and did not hesitate to correct and amend the Aristotelean dregs of Proclus’ Henology in order to recover the true look of Platonism. His aim is clearly to offer a *consistent* Platonic worldview that, obviously, differs from Plato in many points. In his conceptual elaboration, Damascius thereby is very careful to ensure that the *syntactic* rules of Neoplatonism – as the Principles of Continuity, of Plenitude and the Law of Supervenience – are universally valid. In agreement with his inherited

⁴⁹⁵ SIMPLICIUS, *In Epict. Ench.*, 35.245-273, 38.738-746

⁴⁹⁶ DAMASCIUS, *De Princ.*, I 241.23-27, 242.9-15 (= W&C, vol. 3, 1991, p. 38.2-8, p. 38.23-39.8), *In Parm.*, 155.6-7, 235.6-17, 267.21-22 (= W&C, vol. 3, 2001, p. 43.19-20, p. 181.7-22, vol. 4, 2003, p. 39.1-2). The fact that Hecate-Rhea is the source of life and motion is *platonically* sustained by the fact that the Heraclitean doctrine of universal flux is introduced in the *Cratylus* by the etymology of Rhea: PLATO, *Cratylus*, 402a4-b2

⁴⁹⁷ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm.*, 156.17-20, 164.17-22 (= W&C, vol. 3, 2001, p. 45.27-46.9, p. 60.1-6). See: J. COMBÈS, “L’un humain selon Damascius”, in *Etudes Néoplatoniciennes*, J. Millon 1996, p. 195. On Hera and Hestia *qua* generated by Hecate-Rhea, see: PROCLUS, *In Crat.*, 79.5-80.6. By the way, the *resting life* of Hestia obviously refers to: PLATO, *Phaedrus*, 246e4-247a1

⁴⁹⁸ On this point, Damascius deviates from Proclus and follows Iamblichus and Syrianus, see: PROCLUS, *Platonic Theology*, V 38 142.1-143.3, 22-23 and DAMASCIUS, *In Parm.*, 153.17-154.1 (= W&C, vol. 3, 2001, p. 41.1-17)

⁴⁹⁹ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm.*, 235.17-22 (= W&C, vol. 3, 2001, p. 181.22-182.3)

⁵⁰⁰ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm.*, 17.8-10 (= W&C, vol. 1, 1997, p. 22.7-10)

⁵⁰¹ DAMASCIUS, *De Princ.*, I 309.24-310.1, 312.26-29 (= W&C, vol. 3, 1991, p. 148.14-15, 153.8-12)

⁵⁰² On the joint production of the hypercosmic and encosmic levels by the νοῦς ζωογόνος and the νοῦς δημιουργικός, see: DAMASCIUS, *In Parm.*, 155.10-157.10, 235.6-236.2 (= W&C, vol. 3, 2001, p. 44.3-47.12, 181.7-182.9). On the paradigmatic degrees of life and their respective traces into the encosmic level, see: DAMASCIUS, *In Parm.*, 154.22-160.21 (= W&C, vol. 3, 2001, p. 43.1-52.24)

⁵⁰³ To borrow the title of the following paper: L. BRISSON, “Le dernier anneau de la chaîne d’or”, in *Revue d’Etudes Grecques*, 114, 2001, p. 269-282

Parmenides-focusing, he discovers in the ἐξαίφνης the means to explain the technical detail of the self-motion and, consequently, of the very intermediary and mixed being of the soul. Albeit he does this by transferring the ἐξαίφνης from kinematics to dynamics, he does not completely lose the kinematic meaning of the ‘sudden’ however, inasmuch as the dynamic and psychic ἐξαίφνης is mirrored by its kinematic and physical image – that, besides, fulfils a requirement of his quantum kinematics, namely the *weld* between two durative ‘leaps’ – present in the processes produced by the soul *qua* efficient cause⁵⁰⁴.

CONCLUSION: BEYOND DAMASCIUS, TOWARDS THE FLORENTINE ACADEMY

Damascius’ transfer of the ‘sudden’ from kinematics to psychic dynamics shall go unheeded in the posterior Platonic Tradition. Indeed, neither his disciple Simplicius, nor Philoponus, nor Olympiodorus who are well informed of Damascius’ thought, borrow from his doctrine of the psychic ἐξαίφνης. Likewise, nowhere in the Byzantine Theology heavily inspired by Neoplatonism, a technical account of the ἐξαίφνης can be found. Beyond the fact that Christian theologians do not share the same *Parmenides*-focusing as the Neoplatonists, the main reason, I think, is that for them the word ἐξαίφνης refers above all to *Malachias* 3.1 wherein it is said that God enters suddenly the Temple⁵⁰⁵, in such a way that ‘suddenly’ keeps both its mystical and its kinematic meanings, but in a Christian rather than a Platonic way⁵⁰⁶. Moreover, the only Byzantine commentary on the *Parmenides* preserved, namely the sequel to Proclus’ commentary written by George Pachymeres (AD 13th-Century)⁵⁰⁷, comes back to a kinematic reading of the Third Hypothesis⁵⁰⁸, unsurprisingly less influenced by Neoplatonism than by Aristotle’s brief

⁵⁰⁴ DAMASCIUS, *In Parm*, 263.29 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 31.25-32.1)

⁵⁰⁵ Malachi 3.1: ἐξαίφνης ἦξει εἰς τὸν ναὸν αὐτοῦ Κύριος ὃν ὑμεῖς ζητεῖτε (see also: Mark 13.36; Luke 2.13, 9.36; Acts, 9.3, 22.6)

⁵⁰⁶ For instance, in Gregory of Nyssa, see: GREGORY OF NYSSA, *Orationes viii de beatitudinibus*, in J.-P. MIGNE (ed.), *Patrologiae cursus completus (series Graeca)*, 44, p. 1216.49-51 and *Ad imaginem dei et ad similitudinem*, p. 1337.14-20. Gregory quotes *Malachias’ Book* in *Testimonia adversus Judaeos* (J.-P. MIGNE (ed.), *Patrologiae cursus completus (series Graeca)*, 46, p. 201.2.3) and in *De occurs domini* (46, p. 1177.39-42). On the Platonism of Gregory of Nyssa, see: J. DANÉLOU, “Grégoire de Nysse et le néo-platonisme de l’Ecole d’Athènes”, in *Revue des Etudes Grecques*, 80, fasc. 379-383, 1967, p. 395-401

⁵⁰⁷ On the editorial work of Pachymeres on Proclus’ manuscripts, see: C. STEEL, C. MACÉ, “Georges Pachymère philologue: le *Commentaire* de Proclus au *Parménide* dans le manuscrit *Parisinus Gr.* 1810”, in M. CACOUROS, M.-H. CONGOURDEAU (eds.), *Philosophie et Sciences à Byzance de 1204 à 1453. Les textes, les doctrines et leur transmission*, Peeters, 2006, p. 77-99. On the manuscript of Pachymeres, the *Parisianus graecus* 1810 (holding Proclus’ commentary and its continuation by Pachymeres), see: C. LUNA, A.-Ph. SEGONDS (eds.), *Proclus. Commentaire sur le Parménide de Platon*, vol. 1, Les Belles Lettres, 2007, p. clvii-clxiii. On the ‘Aristotelian’ Pachymeres and Neoplatonism, see: Th. A. GADRA, S. M. HONEA, P. M. STINGER, G. UMHOLTZ, L. G. WESTERINK (eds.), *George Pachymeres. Commentary on Plato’s Parmenides [Anonymous Sequel to Proclus’ Commentary]*, Vrin/Ousia, 1989, p. xii-xiv

⁵⁰⁸ G. PACHYMERES, *In Parm*, 1290.26-1292.27, in Th. A. GADRA, S. M. HONEA, P. M. STINGER, G. UMHOLTZ, L. G. WESTERINK (eds.), *George Pachymeres. Commentary on Plato’s Parmenides [Anonymous Sequel to Proclus’ Commentary]*, Vrin/Ousia, 1989, p. 38-40, p. 98-99)

definition of the adverb ‘suddenly’ *qua* infinitesimal duration (viz. a duration smaller than any duration that can be given or perceived)⁵⁰⁹.

The oblivion of Damascius’ innovation could have been corrected later, namely in the Florentine Academy founded by the very erudite Marsilio Ficino. But, although Ficino had likely read – but no translated – Damascius’ *In Parm*, with the annotations of Bessarion⁵¹⁰, nothing in his treatment of the Third Hypothesis can put us in mind that he was very influenced by the diadochus⁵¹¹.

Yet, Marsilio Ficino reconciles kinematics and mysticism in his understanding of the ‘sudden’. But he does this by distancing himself from the Greek Neoplatonists in several points. Notably, he slightly deviates from them about the σκοπός of the Third Hypothesis. Indeed, albeit his interpretation of Proclus’ position is actually a mistake⁵¹², Ficino restrains the σκοπός to the ‘divine’ souls, namely those that have a great likeness with the intellectual gods⁵¹³. The Third Hypothesis is therefore not really devoted to the demonic and human souls (as it is for the successors of Syrianus⁵¹⁴), but rather to the cosmic gods, viz. the souls of the greater spheres, of the stars and of the divinities which exercise providence within the spheres⁵¹⁵.

Although Ficino admits that some changes occur within the soul⁵¹⁶, whatever is its degree of perfection, he follows Proclus by denying that the soul itself undergoes essential change⁵¹⁷. The psychic changes are only the varying activities unfolded by time that proceed from the ‘divine’ and eternal part of the soul, namely from its essence. And what is changing within the soul is only its disposition (*habitus*) or appearance which is firmly understood in a non-essential way⁵¹⁸. Such a position is obviously very Proclean. Anyway, anything else, from Ficino, would have been astonishing⁵¹⁹. Besides, Ficino illustrates this by the image of the sphere of which the centre remains immobile, while its surface undergoes change in the course of its revolution⁵²⁰, so by an image already employed by

⁵⁰⁹ ARISTOTLE, *Phys*, 4.13 222b15-222b26. On another ‘infinitesimal’ reading of the ‘sudden’, see: H. F. CHERNISS, “Parmenides and the *Parmenides* of Plato”, in *The American Journal of Philology*, 53-2, 1932, p. 132 n. 25

⁵¹⁰ See: L. G. WESTERINK, J. COMBÈS (eds.), *Damascius. Traité des Premiers Principes*, Les Belles Lettres, vol. 1, 1986, p. xxix

⁵¹¹ However, Westerink, and after him, van Riel have shown that Ficino’s interpretation of the *Philebus* was, to some extent, dependent on Damascius’, see: L. G. WESTERINK, “Ficino’s Marginal Notes on Olympiodorus in Riccardi Greek MS 37”, in *Traditio*, 24, 1968, p. 354, p. 367-378 and G. VAN RIEL (ed.), *Damascius. Commentaire sur le Philèbe de Platon*, Les Belles Lettres, 2008, p. clxxxiv-clxxxviii

⁵¹² Ficino misunderstands PROCLUS, *In Parm*, VI 1064.3-5 in which Proclus distinguishes between the souls that have a divine essence, and those that have not but are parented or similar to the Gods.

⁵¹³ MARSILIO FICINO, *In Parm*, chap. 52.3-4, 80.1, 96.1 in M. VANHAELEN (ed.), *Marsilio Ficino. Commentaries on Plato. Vol. 2. Parmenides, part. II*, Harvard University Press, 2012, p. 17-19, p. 179, p. 255-256

⁵¹⁴ PROCLUS, *In Parm*, VI 1063.5-1064.12, *Platonic Theology*, I 12 56.19-57.14

⁵¹⁵ MARSILIO FICINO, *In Parm*, chap. 96.1 in M. VANHAELEN (ed.), p. 254-255

⁵¹⁶ MARSILIO FICINO, *In Parm*, chap. 97.2-7 in M. VANHAELEN (ed.), p. 266-271

⁵¹⁷ MARSILIO FICINO, *In Parm*, chap. 96.4-6 in M. VANHAELEN (ed.), p. 258-261

⁵¹⁸ MARSILIO FICINO, *In Parm*, chap. 96.5-10, 97.4, 107.1-3 in M. VANHAELEN (ed.), p. 258-263, p. 268-269, p. 320-323

⁵¹⁹ On the great Ficino’s indebtedness to Proclus, see: M. J. B. ALLEN, “Marsilio Ficino”, in S. GERSH (ed.), *Interpreting Proclus. From Antiquity to the Renaissance*, Cambridge University Press, 2014, p. 353-379

⁵²⁰ MARSILIO FICINO, *In Parm*, chap. 96.7 in M. VANHAELEN (ed.), p. 260-261

Proclus for clarifying the way whereby the soul is both essentially unchangeable and intimately linked to the becoming⁵²¹.

After having briefly summarized the main Aristotelian ideas on the nature of the continuum⁵²², Ficino exhibits the puzzle of the *weld* or of the *articulation* between two durative phases and its Platonic answer⁵²³. To sustain the Platonic kinematics, Ficino draws a strong dichotomy between, on the one hand, the *physical* kinematics which is well theorized by Aristotle and his followers, and, on the other, the *psychic* kinematics of which the laws are somewhat different⁵²⁴. Notably, and here Ficino still follows Proclus⁵²⁵, while the physical world is characterized by its continuity and its divisibility *ad infinitum*, the spiritual world, quite the reverse, is rather characterized by its ‘atomism’ and its composition out of indivisible elements. In other words, while the corporeal diacosm can be studied geometrically, the higher diacosms are merely arithmetical. If so, between two psychic motions, there is not an interval of time – as some physicists had argued for the corporeal motions, most likely by conceiving such an interval as an infinitesimal magnitude –, but a real sizeless switch that is the ἐξαίφνης of the Third Hypothesis.

The puzzle of the ‘instant of change’ therefore works only for the durative activities of the soul, and not for the durative motions of the body. For Ficino, the ‘sudden’ belongs to the non-bodily diacosms wherein the geometric continuous is replaced by the arithmetic discrete. It is beyond time, in the sense of it is eternal, even super-eternal, insofar as it is undivided⁵²⁶. But Ficino’s reading of the ‘sudden’ is far to be a pure kinematic understanding. Indeed, the mystical tone is forcefully kept by Ficino, inasmuch as he brings the ‘sudden’ closer to the transcendence of the One which is beyond all opposites⁵²⁷, that seems to be a reminiscence of Plotinus, or, at least of the mystical meeting between the soul and the One-Beauty from *Symposium*, 210e2-211a2.

In fact, Ficino argues that the ἐξαίφνης, by virtue of its likeness with the One which is none of the opposites, is the punctual pivot whereby all the alternations between opposites are steered, so their transcendent and timeless seed that is neither the positive nor the negative side⁵²⁸. Here, the laconic comment of Ficino is very close to transferring the psychic ἐξαίφνης from kinematics towards dynamics. But, something holds him back, and he does not jump over the ford. Ficino actually supports a twofold view of the ‘sudden’: first, the pure kinematic and durationless transition from a phase to another which occurs in an undivided temporal instant⁵²⁹ and prevents the confusion of the two opposite phases,

⁵²¹ PROCLUS, *In Tim*, II 130.27-28, and in DAMASCIUS, *In Parm*, 247.12, 20-25 (= W&C, vol. 4, 2003, p. 29.5, 17-30.3)

⁵²² MARSILIO FICINO, *In Parm*, chap. 97.8-10 in M. VANHAELEN (ed.), p. 270-273

⁵²³ MARSILIO FICINO, *In Parm*, chap. 97.11-98.8 in M. VANHAELEN (ed.), p. 272-283

⁵²⁴ MARSILIO FICINO, *In Parm*, chap. 97.12, 98.7 in M. VANHAELEN (ed.), p. 272-275, p. 280-281

⁵²⁵ On the spiritual multiplicity and the physical continuity in Proclus, see: J. OPSOMER, “The Integration of Aristotelian Physics in a Neoplatonic Context: Proclus on Movers and Divisibility”, in R. CHIARADONNA, F. TRABATTONI (eds.), *Physics and Philosophy of Nature in Greek Neoplatonism*, Brill, 2009, p. 214-229

⁵²⁶ MARSILIO FICINO, *In Parm*, chap. 97.7, 12 in M. VANHAELEN (ed.), p. 270-271, p. 274-275

⁵²⁷ MARSILIO FICINO, *In Parm*, chap. 97.12 in M. VANHAELEN (ed.), p. 274-275

⁵²⁸ MARSILIO FICINO, *In Parm*, chap. 97.12, 98.5 in M. VANHAELEN (ed.), p. 274-275, p. 278-279. The soul in itself is understood as a compound of the opposites, a mixture of negations and assertions, in agreement with the *Timaeus*: MARSILIO FICINO, *In Parm*, chap. 96.1 in M. VANHAELEN (ed.), p. 256-257 and *In Tim*, chap. 27-33, in A. FARNDILL (ed.), *All Things Natural: Ficino on Plato’s Timaeus*, Shephard-Walwyn, 2010, p. 44-71

⁵²⁹ Ficino lightens the reasoning of *Parm*, 156c-e by emphasizing the rejection of *moving* at an instant and of instantaneous velocity: MARSILIO FICINO, *In Parm*, chap. 98.7-8 in M. VANHAELEN (ed.), p. 280-281

and second, the superior and more mystical ‘sudden’ that is super-eternal and transcendent in which the soul recovers its logical neutrality that mirrors the highest neutrality of the First One⁵³⁰. This last ‘sudden’ which Ficino calls *divinum momentum* corresponds to the connection of the soul with the highest and super-everlasting principle of Ficino’s Henology, namely the One which is above essence (*super essentiam*). None of these ‘sudden’ are really dynamic, but only the first is purely kinematic, while the second is kinematic only to the extent that, from its transcendent point of view, it overlays the first.

All things considered, the most important point in Ficino’s exegesis of the Third Hypothesis is that the ‘sudden’, under pressure from the prevailing Aristotelian physics, belongs only to the psychic kinematics that challenges with discrete rather than continuous motions, in such a way that the aim of Plato – namely, answering the continuum-problem of the ‘instant of change’ – is completely lost.

Apart from Ficino, it is hard to discern an interest for the ἐξαίφνης in the Italian Platonism. For instance, Pico della Mirandola, who met and challenged Ficino⁵³¹, had included Damascius in his philosophical curriculum⁵³², but it is difficult to discover a great influence of Damascius on his syncretic thought. In spite of the renewed of interest for Damascius in the AD 15th and 16th Centuries⁵³³, at the current stage of research, it does not appear that his ‘psychology’ had a great effect upon the Platonic revival. Nevertheless, the studies on Patrizi’s Platonism are quite promising⁵³⁴.

Damascius’ one-shot in the Platonic Tradition shows us how the Platonists do not hesitate to radically twist the texts of Plato for hardening the consistency of the Platonic conceptual scheme. Albeit the ἐξαίφνης is a secondary or an outlying concept, the very various ways whereby Platonists had understood it indicate that every Plato’s follower is perfectly aware of the requirements imposed on him by his global conception of the aim and the argument of the Platonism (viz. by the particular universe he draws in accordance with the axiomatic core of the Platonic theory). A Platonist decides to emphasize the mystical facet of the ‘sudden’ in order to sustain the nomological rupture between here and yonder, another the connection of the ‘sudden’ with the soul either to guarantee the validity of the bijection between the schedule of the *Parmenides* and the scale of beings, or for clarifying the blended and intermediary nature of the soul. Since ἐξαίφνης is a *terminus technicus* and a *terminus mysticus* at once, the various balance between its two facets sketches different Platonisms, in the same – but in a less prominent – way that the centre of gravity of the *Corpus Platonicum* they chose. That way, the great wealth of Plato’s Corpus, its unparalleled potentialities, is highlighted again.

⁵³⁰ MARSILIO FICINO, *In Parm.*, chap. 98.6-8 in M. VANHAELEN (ed.), p. 278-281

⁵³¹ U. I. AASDALEN, “The First Pico-Ficino Controversy”, in S. CLUCAS, P. J. FORSHAW, V. REES (eds.), *Laus Platonici Philosophi. Marsilio Ficino and his Influence*, Brill, 2011, p. 67-88 ; M. J. B. ALLEN, “The Second Ficino-Pico Controversy: Parmenidean Poetry, Eristic and the One”, in G. C. GARGAGNINI (ed.), *Marsilio Ficino e il ritorno di Platone. Studi e documenti*, vol. 2, Firenze, 1986, p. 418-455 and M. VANHAELEN, “The Pico-Ficino Controversy: New Evidence in Ficino’s Commentary on Plato’s *Parmenides*”, in *Rinascimento*, 49, 2009, p. 301-339

⁵³² PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Oratio de hominis dignitate*, in N. BAUMGARTEN, A. BUCK (eds.), *Giovanni Pico della Mirandola. De hominis dignitate/Über die Würde des Menschen*, Verlag, 1990, p. 44-45

⁵³³ C. E. RUELLE, *Le philosophe Damascius. Etude sur sa vie et ses ouvrages suivie de neuf morceaux inédits*, Paris, 1861, p. 37-57, *Damascii Dubitationes et Solutiones*, I, Berlin, 1890, p. iii-xvii and L. G. WESTERINK (ed.), *The Greek Commentaries on Plato’s Phaedo. Vol. II Damascius*, North-Holland Publishing Company, 1977, p. 18

⁵³⁴ Th. LEINKAUF, “Die Rezeption des Damaskios im Denken des Francesco Patrizi”, in *Accademia*, 13, 2011, p. 47-65 and “Francesco Patrizi”, in S. GERSH (ed.), *Interpreting Proclus. From Antiquity to the Renaissance*, Cambridge University Press, 2014, p. 380-402

January 2018
Catholic University of Louvain
Institut supérieur de philosophie/Centre De Wulf-Mansion
florian.marion@uclouvain.be